

CHRISTIANITY AND THE IMAGINED LATINO SELF: THE EMERGENCE OF  
PAN-ETHNIC IDENTITY AMONG LATINOS IN PATERSON, NEW JERSEY

By

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by

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This document is dedicated to my daughter Tatiana, my husband Carlos and my parents  
Iris and René.

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This study examined the role of religion on ethnic identity. In particular, this study tested whether active religious involvement had an effect on the emergence of pan-Latino identity among Latino/Hispanic Christians in the multi-Hispanic urban environment of Paterson, New Jersey. The study's results confirm the existence of a pan-Latino identity in Peterson, both in the religious communities selected as research sites and in the city as a whole. In addition, the results offer evidence of the importance of congregations for the study of ethnicity as they provide a protected setting for the construction and reconstruction of identities. Although churches are clearly central to the issue of identity construction among immigrant communities, the finding also show the contextualized nature of this process, for the way in which pan-ethnicity and nationality are negotiated is determined by the internal dynamics of each religious community. Furthermore, factors like the ideology of the pastor, his/her contact with the congregation and the changing demographics of the membership all affect how identities are

negotiated. Perhaps the most important conclusion of this study is that pan-ethnicity (at least in the case of Latinos/Hispanics) must not be understood as an alternative to or substitute for national identities. Pan-Latino identity in Paterson has not replaced, but instead co-exists and compliments national identities.

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Beginning in the mid 1990s and into the new millennium, the United States has witnessed an explosion of Latino/Hispanic popular culture. Celebrities like Ricky Martin, Marc Anthony and Antonio Banderas “crossed over” to mainstream North American culture, while at the same time Latino/Hispanic politicians like Henry Cisneros, Bill Richardson and Rosario Marin have been appointed or elected to political posts of national prominence. The increased visibility of individuals of Latin American background has propelled nationally the notion of a Hispanic or Latino culture and has in some regards made being Latino/Hispanic not a stigma, but instead something desirable.

This surge of Latino/Hispanic popular culture begs scholars to revisit the issue of the existence of a pan-Latino/Hispanic identity. Towards the end of the last millennium, academics engaged in a lively discussion, which described the reality of individuals of Latin American origin as one in which national origin still remained as the preferred category for self-identification. Therefore, argued many, the idea of a Latino/Hispanic identity was precisely just a notion created by government demographers whose agenda was to “lump” together an extremely diverse and divided group whose only commonality was language.

However, other scholars later joined the debate arguing that it was necessary to consider the possibility of multiple identities functioning together. While there was no question that national origin still dominated self-identification categories amongst this group, perhaps a better way of understanding this concept was to do away with the



paradigm that the preferred identity was invariably exclusive of all others. In other words, perhaps a more effective way of approaching this question was by considering that even if someone chose to self-identify on the basis of national origin, s/he could also choose to self-identify as Latino/Hispanic. If this was the case, then the idea of a Latino/Hispanic identity needed to be revisited.

This study aimed to test whether in fact there was evidence that Latin American immigrants and their descendants were adopting notions of pan-ethnicity and if so what that identity meant to them. In order to conduct such a test, it was necessary to think of the factors that would contribute to its development. Obvious variables such as income, education, migration status and length of stay were incorporated into the investigation. However, given the role that religious institutions have had in maintaining culture and language for Latin Americans in the US, I thought it important to investigate whether religious participation was a catalyst driving changes in identities. Furthermore, if religious participation was found to be an important variable, it was necessary to examine how it was affecting the reconstruction of identities.

### **Significance**

One may ask, why should anyone be interested in understanding the role of religion on identity construction among Latinos/Hispanics?<sup>1</sup> Answering that question requires at least three approaches, a pragmatic, a normative and a theoretical approach. From a pragmatic perspective, one must first be concerned with the latent importance of the Latino/Hispanic vote for United States' politics. A pan-ethnic identity could be the

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<sup>1</sup>It has yet to be proven that the terms Latinos/Hispanics constitute an adopted identity or category. However, for the purposes of simplicity, here I will use the terms Latinos/Hispanics to refer to individuals born in the United States of Latin American ancestry and to immigrants born in Latin America, including the Spanish-speaking Caribbean.

catalyst for a potential Latino/Hispanic voting bloc (DeSipio, 1996). While in 1990, the Latino/Hispanic community constituted 9% of the total U.S. population, by the year 2000, Latinos/Hispanics had overtaken all other minority groups in the US, increasing their numbers to 12.5% of the population (U.S. Census 2000). Some outside estimates expect the Latino/Hispanic population to grow to almost 25% of the total US population by the year 2050.<sup>2</sup> While Latinos/Hispanics in the northeastern part of the US have traditionally identified with the Democratic party, that trend is not replicated throughout the country. Further, even those Latinos/Hispanics who have previously been Democrats are not necessarily exercising party loyalty in all elections. Thus, the Latino/Hispanic vote is up for grabs and therefore none of the major political parties should ignore it.

In addition, Latinos/Hispanics are concentrated in states with large numbers of electoral votes (i.e., Florida, California, Texas, New York). This concentration became a strategic consideration for national politicians and their advisors during the 1990s. For the first time, presidential candidates like Bill Clinton and later on George W. Bush made significant efforts to openly court the Latino/Hispanic population, and upon winning the Presidency, both appointed Latinos/Hispanics to prominent positions in their cabinets. President George W. Bush's personal friendship with Mexican President Vicente Fox brought immigration policy to the forefront of President Bush's policy agenda during the first year of his administration. While the September 11<sup>th</sup> tragedy and the ensuing invasions of both Afghanistan and Iraq detracted attention from immigration reform, President Bush has once again raised immigration reform as part of his administration's agenda. While the true intentions of the President's "Immigration Proposal" are unknown, many have argued that the timing of its presentation (January 2004) clearly

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<sup>2</sup> For statistics see "Frequently Asked Questions." National Council of La Raza, <http://www.nclr.org/>.

indicates that it is an election year plot to attract Latinos/Hispanics voters (King, Barrett and Turnham, 2004). Given Latinos/Hispanics' numerical significance, it is likely that this trend in the national political arena will only continue to grow, making this community one that cannot be ignored as a consequential political force.

From a normative standpoint, the rise of ethnic mobilization and conflict around the world in places such as the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and the Middle East has driven a renewed interest in the subject. Unfortunately, this interest has resulted in some alarmist works like Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* (1996). Although the United States has not suffered from the "balkanization" of identities, works like Peter Brimelow's *Alien Nation* (1995) are a reflection of the kind of inflammatory rhetoric that breeds ethnic divisions and potentially leads to conflict. Discussing the "Second Great Wave" of immigration (the 1990s) he writes:

For the first time, virtually all immigrants are racially distinct "visible minorities." They come not from Europe, previously the common homeland even for the 1890-1920 immigrants about which Americans were so nervous. Instead, these new immigrants are from completely different, and arguable incompatible, cultural traditions. And as we have seen they are coming in such numbers that their impact on America is enormous-inevitably within the foreseeable future, they will transform it. (56)

Understanding how immigrants negotiate loyalties to their countries of origin and settlement, and the implications this has for concepts of nationhood and citizenship, enables us to dispel myths about the presence of permanent "foreigners" or ethnic "others." In particular, the case of Latinos/Hispanics in the United States provides a vital opportunity to explore this process by examining the formation of an identity, which has yet to be adopted completely or become politicized.

From a theoretical perspective, this study aimed to push the boundaries of the literature on transnational migration and fill an empirical gap within the works on

Latino/Hispanic religion. Although more recent contributions to the literature of transnational networks have begun to address the horizontal linkages in both home and host countries carved out by immigrants (Peterson, Vasquez and Williams, 2001), some scholars continue to focus much of their attention on documenting transnational ties while ignoring the effect that those ties or lack thereof have on immigrants' adaptation experiences. In addition, while recent works have linked religion and Latino/Hispanic identity, more research is needed in order to provide empirical evidence of such a relationship.

Finally, this study seeks to question the mutual exclusivity between instrumentalism and constructivism, two competing schools of cultural pluralism. While each presents a different vision of identity, it may be possible that the formation and representations of identity respond to a combination of both of these models. Thus, it may be the case that identity construction reflects both rational calculations of the benefits of adopting or rejecting pan-ethnicity (instrumentalism) and a dynamic and fluid reconstruction creating a pan-ethnic identity (constructivism). Such evidence would call for a reconsideration of these competing schools of thought which have dominated much of the debate on cultural pluralism.

### **Purpose**

This is a study about the process of formation and construction of ethnic identity among Latinos/Hispanics. This is not a study of religion. As mentioned above, religious participation is the independent variable that most interests this scholar, yet it is one among the many independent variables that can effect changes in identities. Therefore, the aim here is to test whether and how religious participation, among other factors, affects identity construction.

In addition to the socio-economic, political and demographic variables mentioned above, the study focuses on the role of two aspects of immigrants' religious experiences: active religious involvement and the role of the church leadership (i.e., pastors, priests, etc) on the construction of identities. For the purposes of this research, active religious involvement is defined as membership and active participation in at least one of the lay groups recognized by an established Christian church.<sup>3</sup>

Active religious involvement was selected as an independent variable for the following reasons. First, changes in social identities depend on close contact with multiple groups (Nagel, 1994). Given that most immigrants arrive in the US with the aid of some familial or social tie and thus use those networks as a source of employment opportunities, housing, etc., many new immigrants initially have limited contacts with persons outside of their national origin group. Churches serve as a meeting place where individuals can interact with other Latinos/Hispanics of different nationalities (Stevens-Arroyo and Díaz-Stevens, 1998, and Ebaugh and Chafetz, 2000). Furthermore, participation in lay groups often involves the development of personal and intimate relationships with other members. These kinds of relationships build networks of trust and camaraderie, which are important elements of adopting a shared identity. Second, prior to the proliferation of the Spanish language media, churches, at times, provided the only public space in which Latinos/Hispanics could maintain language and cultural practices (Stevens-Arroyo, 1998). Third, religious institutions are of special importance to disadvantaged groups in providing access to political and social resources (Verba,

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<sup>3</sup>Neither regular attendance at a weekly services, nor registration in the church will be considered active religious involvement. "Membership" and "regular attendance" will be defined on the basis of each lay group's meeting schedules. Determinations will be made based participants' responses, as well as on communications with the leadership.

1993). Thus, this study aims to understand whether and how ARI affects the redefinition of identities.

In addition to active religious involvement, preliminary research for this project suggested a causal link between the role of the leadership and the adoption of some form of pan-ethnicity. Priests, pastors, religious women, and lay leaders all impart values, beliefs and morals upon their members. Furthermore, as Sydney Verba notes "leaders and staff in these settings [religious institutions] often make deliberate attempts to mobilize the ranks to political action" (8). Whether the church leadership is promoting political activism or not, the moral and spiritual authority of the church leadership provides them with a potentially critical role in the process of identity formation. It appears that the nationality and ideology of the leadership are the crucial factors in determining whether a pan-Latino identity is encouraged. Thus, this study seeks to test whether pan-ethnicity increases in settings in which a North American priest, pastor or lay leader is present versus churches with Latin American leadership.

### **Research Site and Design**

Based on preliminary field research conducted during the summer of 1997, two Roman Catholic parishes and one Protestant church in Paterson, New Jersey, were chosen as the sites for this study. In addition, a Comparison Group was created by conducting phone interviews with randomly selected Latinos/Hispanics residing in the city of Paterson.<sup>4</sup> A total of 246 surveys were collected; 66 and 68 in the two Catholic communities, 13 in the Protestant community and 99 for the Comparison group. All respondents were asked to self-identify on the basis of ethnicity and to provide socio-

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<sup>4</sup>The Comparison Group was drawn from individuals with Spanish surnames who were listed in the phone book with a Paterson address. Please see Appendix B for a full description of the research design.

economic data and information about their participation in religious groups and activities. The survey also included attitudinal questions, which gauged participants' attitudes towards issues such as whether religious institutions have a role in fostering pan-ethnic identification.<sup>5</sup>

Paterson is a multi-Hispanic city, in which two or more groups compete for the majority of the Latino/Hispanic population. This point is significant since I hypothesize that the probability of pan-ethnicity increases when different national origin groups have substantial contact with each other on a relatively equal playing field. In other words, where no one national group is dominant national identities are more likely to give way or to co-exist with a pan-Latino identity.

Puerto Ricans constitute the largest national origin group amongst the Latino/Hispanic population in Paterson, New Jersey. In 1990, Puerto Ricans made up more than 45% of the Latino/Hispanic population of the city. By the year 2000, Puerto Ricans composed 32.1% of that population, while Dominicans, the only other national group approximating Puerto Ricans, constituted 20.5%. South Americans (primarily Peruvians and Colombians) made up 18.5% of the Latino/Hispanic community.

The changes in the composition of the Latino/Hispanic population in Paterson are significant because they describe a more balanced political, social and economic setting than that of other US cities. For Latinos/Hispanics in Paterson to be a socio-economic or political force, they must work together, building a multi-national coalition. Puerto Ricans in the city have made inroads into public service positions, but they have never achieved the highest public offices. As their numbers continue to decline, it is unlikely

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<sup>5</sup>See Appendix B for a copy of Catholic survey. For copies of the other surveys, please contact the researcher.

that they will be able to achieve such offices without the help of other national origin groups. It is this context that makes Paterson an interesting case.

One may argue that Paterson's context makes it an interesting, but unique case with no relevance for other cities with Latino/Hispanic populations. I would disagree. While cities like Miami, Florida and Los Angeles, California have historically had one Latino/Hispanic national origin group which has been dominant over others, that scene is slowly changing. Clearly, Mexicans hold and will continue to hold numerical dominance in the southwestern US and in the nation as a whole. Yet, increasingly, other national origin groups are beginning to demand the attention of the more established Mexican, Mexican-American and Chicano population. Similarly, in Miami and other south Florida communities, Cuban-Americans are learning that their political and economic dominance will be maintained if they make alliances with Venezuelans, Colombians and others, as opposed to ignoring their growing numbers and visibility within the community. These changing dynamics make Paterson's experiences very relevant.

Understanding identity is an extremely complex undertaking; therefore, this study employed a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Surveys were conducted understanding that aggregate data were necessary in order to be able to ascertain patterns that would frame the study's conclusions. The survey data also enabled me to test which variables had a significant effect on the dependent variable. In order to uncover the meaning that identities had for the respondents, qualitative methodologies were imperative. In-depth interviews and ethnographies enabled me to gain an understanding of how life experiences affect the (re)construction of identities. The interviews focused on individuals actively participating in a lay group and with the



leaders (both lay and clergy) of each community. The interviews drew from the survey items (i.e., on self-identification, contacts with and attitudes about other Latinos/Hispanics, role of religious participation and leadership, etc.) and attempted to examine the meaning behind the answers as understood by the participants.

Participant observation was employed to examine the interaction among members and the leadership during services, church-sponsored activities and lay group meetings. The aim of this methodology was to decipher the dynamics of exchange among participants and between participants and the leadership. How do the teachings of the lay leadership differ from those of the clergy? How do participants respond to both? Is one or the other more proactive in shaping identity? Participant observation enabled me to gauge this interaction in a way that would not be possible if simply relying on surveys or interviews. Finally, representatives of important religious and secular community organizations were interviewed in order to examine the perspectives of political elites.

### **Hypotheses**

Based on these assumptions and the results of my preliminary field research, the hypotheses are:

H<sub>1</sub>: Pan-ethnic identification among Latino/Hispanic Christians increases with active religious involvement.

H<sub>2</sub>: The nationality and ideology of the Church leadership directly affects whether pan-ethnic identification emerges, i.e., where the parish priests are North American, pan-ethnic identification is more likely, where parish priests are Latin American or Latino/Hispanic, the prospect of pan-ethnic identification decreases.

### **Research Questions**

Using social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981 and Hurtado, Gurin and Peng, 1994) this project begins from the assumption that Latinos/Hispanics must find ways of resolving the tension between self-identification on the basis of nationality (i.e., Puerto Ricans,

Mexicans, Salvadorans), and social categorization by the larger society often employing pan-ethnic terms, such as Latino/Hispanic. Thus, some of the research questions this study will attempt to answer are:

1. Are Latinos/Hispanics adopting notions of pan-ethnicity?
2. If so, what does pan-ethnicity (the terms Latino/Hispanic) mean to them?
3. Has active religious involvement been a catalyst driving changes in identity? If so, how?
4. Have the teachings and views of a pastor or priest challenged or changed individuals' notions of identity?
5. Have close interactions with other Latinos/Hispanics in a religious community affected how individuals self-identify?
6. Is pan-Latino identity a reconstruction of previous identities that have now been adopted or accepted as real or is it an instrumental identity used for political or economic purposes?
7. Can pan-Latino identity be a combination of both?
8. Do notions of pan-ethnicity reflect shared experiences, or cultural and religious traditions?
9. If so, what are the implications of those shared patterns for political mobilization?
10. Does ethnic identity play a significant role in the political decisions and participation of Latinos/Hispanics?

### **Chapter Summary**

Chapter 2 is a review of the various literatures relevant to the two hypotheses of this study. The review of the literature examines scholarly work in four areas of study: 1) immigrant adaptation or incorporation, 2) cultural pluralism, 3) Latinos/Hispanics in the United States and 4) Latino/Hispanic religion. Chapter 2 argues that although the topic of the role of religious participation in the emergence of a pan-Latino identity speaks to each one of these fields of study, most scholarly work has not attempted to bridge the boundaries of these literatures. Chapter 3 examines the history of Paterson as an immigrant-receiving city, with particular emphasis on the arrival of Latin American immigrants and their descendants. In addition, it investigates the role of Latinos/Hispanics in Paterson's recent political climate.

Chapter 4 describes the results of the surveys from the three religious communities and the random sample. It presents the strong preference for self-identification on the basis of a Latino/Hispanic identity and highlights apparent trends in the results, comparing them to Census 2000 data. Even more importantly, the results in Chapter 4 also reveal the importance of churches for identity construction as the analysis uncovered the existence of multiple or co-existing identities, by which respondents selectively retain allegiance to national identities, while at the same time adopting notions of pan-ethnicity. Chapter 5 uses qualitative methodologies to investigate the meanings of the answers provided in the surveys by respondents. In-depth interviews uncover that active religious participation does indeed play a significant role in the adoption of a Latino/Hispanic identity. Respondents indicate that the close relationships established through lay groups have resulted in dispelling previously held stereotypes about other national origin groups. This, in turn, has brought about a broadening of the notion of community, where nationality is no longer the most important variable. Moreover, conversations with respondents and participant observation paint a picture of the role of religious leadership in fostering or resisting notions of pan-ethnicity.

Chapter 6 uses quantitative analysis to search for statistically significant relationships among variables. The results of the logistical regression reveal that income and length of stay had a statistically significant effect on Latino/Hispanic identity. However, when the independent variable is changed to reflect a combination of pan-ethnicity and nationality, tests show attitudes on such issues as having the right to celebrate national festivities are statistically significant. Finally, Chapter 7 summarizes

the findings of the research and highlights the results of most scholarly and political significance.

## CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### **Introduction**

Examining how Latino/Hispanic identities are shaped by religious participation requires familiarity with various bodies of scholarly literature. This chapter reviews these literatures and highlights their significance for this study. First, since in the case of immigrants, identity (re)construction involves some level of adaptation to a new environment, understanding the extensive literature on assimilation is a useful starting point. Scholarly work on transnational migration has challenged some of the conclusions of the assimilation model and provided an important counterpoint. Yet recent scholarship notes that the assimilation model still has much to offer and that its relationship with transnational migration is not one that necessarily has to be mutually exclusive.

Second, in order to understand how ethnic identity is (re)created, I have relied on the literature of the three schools of cultural pluralism. I have chosen the constructivist perspective as the theoretical framework for this study. However, one of the questions this project seeks to answer is whether Latino/Hispanic identity can reflect aspects of primordialism, instrumentalism and constructivism. Therefore, it is vital to understand the contributions of each school.

Third, since undertaking this project, there has been a substantial growth in the literature on Latinos/Hispanics in the United States, particularly in the disciplines of political science and sociology. More and more scholars have begun studying Latino/Hispanic participation in the political, social, economic, religious and cultural life

of this country. Latino/Hispanic identity has yet to become the focus of national empirical studies, but its significance is recognized at some level in most of these works. Finally, the literature on Latino/Hispanic religion will be examined to frame the larger questions guiding this research.

### **The Assimilation Model**

Since the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, much of U.S. scholarship on immigrants' settlement and adaptation patterns has been dominated by assimilation theory. As early as the 1950s, scholars like J. Clyde Mitchell (1956) and A.L. Epstein (1958) began documenting the experiences of migrants whose entry into a new, different, at times alien, social environment did not represent a break in ties with their societies of origin. However, until recently, the prevalence of assimilation theory resulted in an environment that viewed patterns of cultural retention as temporary phases in the long-term process of incorporation into the host society (Park, 1950 and Gordon, 1964).

Robert E. Park and Milton Gordon, two of the foremost proponents of assimilation theory, understand immigration and migration as integral parts of societal reorganization processes. They both developed linear models describing the stages corresponding to immigrants' adaptation process. Park's race relations cycle included four stages: contacts, competition, accommodation and assimilation (1950). Gordon expanded this concept in his seven-stage assimilation typology (1964). The last stages of his typology, Gordon's contribution to the assimilation model, are important because they incorporate the attitudes of the receiving society towards immigrants. Until this time, the assimilationist perspective had refused to recognize that attitudes in the receiving society towards incoming immigrants affect immigrant adaptation. This is a significant

contribution since understanding identity not only requires examining how individuals view themselves, but also how they believe others view them.

The clarity, linearity, and simplicity of their models aided in demystifying immigrants' adaptation to US society. However, Park and Gordon, along with other scholars supporters of the assimilation model (and modernization theory, more broadly) envisioned that assimilation was the final stage in a universal process (Feagin and Feagin, 1996 and Smith, 1981). Cultural retention and the notion of individuals who could co-exist comfortably in both receiving and sending societies were seen as both unlikely and undesired outcomes.

In addition, Gordon was criticized for excluding the tensions and conflict that are part of the adaptation process. Croucher notes that the author

portrays the interaction between groups as a peaceful, smooth progression through established and universal stages of adaptation to the core culture. He assumes that cultural, economic, political and social distinctions are erased in the final stage Gordon excludes power relations and resource inequalities between different groups. (1997, 8-9)

For Croucher, Gordon's seven stages over-simplify relations between established groups in the receiving society and new immigrants. In reality, inter-group relations often involve real and perceived competition, discrimination and at times overt hostility. Thus, while these models are examples of elegant theories, they failed to incorporate 1) the complexities that occur when receiving societies interact with and react to new immigrants and 2) the impact those contacts have on immigrant adaptation.

By the 1970s, assimilationists like Milton Gordon and Robert E. Park came under attack. The call for racial and ethnic tolerance had been present among academic and liberal circles since the 1940s. Yet, the popular mobilizations of racial and ethnic

minorities during the 1960s resulted in demands that race and ethnicity be accepted as fixtures of the diversity of U.S. society. Nathan Glazer comments:

The new development has emerged directly out of the demands of minority groups for recognition. There was the explosive impact of the "black power" slogan and all it carried in its train – the demands of Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans, of Asian Americans, of American Indians, and then the "new pluralism" of the white ethnic groups with their demands for equal time and equal recognition.... There is an emphasis on individual and group wholeness, health, identity; a "heightened sense of being," "respect," "cohesiveness," and survival. Ethnic identity, the ethnic group, is good; it should not be merely tolerated. (1983: 109)

These popular cries for recognition led to an increase in the salience of ethnicity. Around the world more and more people openly challenged modernization's assumptions by self-identifying on the basis of ethnic identity. As the promises of full citizenship of the liberal nation-state did not materialize, individuals sought alternative means of membership and participation.

The re-emergence of ethnicity as a key factor in economic, social and political life around the globe was a direct contradiction to the predictions and assumptions of assimilation theory. Assimilationists like Gordon and Park failed to recognize that identities do not follow a uni-linear model. Immigrants' adaptation experiences cannot be charted along a fixed forward-moving path. Rather the paths traveled are by-ways in which there are both forward and backward movements as immigrants and subsequent generations both acquire and reject certain elements of the host society. Assimilation theory's inability to envision this more complex adaptation process resulted in a framework in which the re-emergence of ethnicity was unlikely, if not impossible.

In addition, assimilationists missed the role that existing state and societal structures would have on ethnicity. While both Gordon and Park expected some tension between elements of the receiving society and the new immigrants, they neglected the



impact of the rigidity of the host society's cultural and racial boundaries. Some immigrants may have wanted to move effortlessly through these assimilation stages, but were met with strict racial and ethnic categorizations that limited their ability to "fit in." Thus, assimilation theory over-simplified a process in which immigrants move both forwards and backwards and react to state and societal obstacles, which dictate whether they will be accepted as full "Americans."

Finally, in the United States, social scientists began recognizing that acculturation was not a one-way process as assimilation theory suggested. Just as immigrants and ethnic communities adjusted their own cultural behaviors and traditions, so did the larger society by adopting some of the traits of the minority communities. In some cases, those traditions and cultural elements have become unique expressions of the host society. Therefore, the assimilation model incorrectly assumed that the incorporation of new communities would not involve cultural exchange but, rather, only new immigrants' absorption of the host society's culture.

Although by the 1960s the assimilation model was falling into disrepute in many academic circles, by the 1990s a number of scholars challenged the fields of anthropology, sociology, political science and history to rethink their banishment of the theoretical construct. Richard Alba and Victor Nee, two such academics, argue that

whatever the deficiencies of earlier formulations and applications of assimilation, we hold that this social science concept offers the best way to understand and describe the integration into the mainstream experienced across generations by many individuals and ethnic groups, even if it cannot be regarded as a universal outcome of American life. (1999)

While Alba and Nee understand the reasons for the extensive criticism of assimilation, they believe that the concept's most basic tenets (i.e., the decline of ethnic and racial differences between groups in society) still hold true in describing the incorporation of a

majority of immigrants to US society. Their analysis demonstrates that although racial differences, in particular, remain an obstacle for upward social mobility and incorporation, immigrants experience such obstacles differently. While some argue that dark skin color is a barrier for all groups, the experiences of highly skilled South Asian immigrants suggest differences from those of African American groups (Portes and Rumbaut, 1996). In addition, continued work on the second generation has demonstrated that language assimilation, in particular, is following the model of previous immigrant populations (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001).

Similarly to Alba and Nee, Alejandro Portes and Rubén Rumbaut have also revisited the assimilation model and reconstituted it in what they call “segmented assimilation.” The concept is defined as

[a process] where outcomes vary across immigrant minorities and where rapid integration and acceptance into the American mainstream represent just one possible alternative. [Four factors are] considered decisive: 1) the history of the immigrant first generation; 2) the pace of acculturation among parents and children and its bearing on normative integration; 3) the barriers, cultural and economic confronted by second-generation youth in their quest for successful adaptation and 4) the family and community resources for confronting these barriers. (45-46)

In essence, Portes and Rumbaut theorize that the human capital of the first generation, and the governmental and societal reception that immigrants and their children experience affect the process of incorporation and whether and how the second generation “assimilates.”

Segmented assimilation offers a well-articulated clarification to the assimilation model which incorporates the US’ contemporary social, economic and political context. However, like most models, it contains a rigidity that does not allow for the flexibility required to understand the individual pathway taken by each second-generation member. In particular, the “types of acculturation across generations” model created by the

scholars offers little room for departure from the “expected outcomes” (52). Portes and Rumbaut recognize that a great majority of the second generation becomes English proficient (bilingual) if not English dominant however, there is great disparity with respect to the adoption of English of the immigrant generation. Nevertheless, in their typology the combination of English achievement from the second generation and lack of acquisition of English skills on the part of parents results in a negative outcome: dissonant acculturation (including rupture of family ties and loss of parental authority).

It is my opinion that this typology does not allow room for the creative ways that parents have to enforce authority and impart important values, such as the respect for parental authority, a strong work ethic, ambition, and the value of education, upon their children. While clearly parental English acquisition adds to the household’s economic, social and political possibilities for upward mobility, it is not be understood as a determinant for second-generation success or failure. Perhaps Rumbaut himself recognizes the limitations of the model by noting that “family may be the strategic research site for understanding the dynamics of immigration and immigrant adaptation processes, as well as for their long-term consequences. We need to recognize from the outset that it makes no sense to speak of a singular immigrant or immigrant family experience” (1999: 186)

### **Multiculturalism**

Out of the many criticisms of assimilation theory arose the model of multiculturalism (or cultural pluralism as it is also commonly known). It is important here to acknowledge that I refer here to cultural pluralism in the US context, not as it will be described below in reference to instrumentalism, constructivism and primordialism. Multiculturalism emerged as a counterbalance to the assimilation model positing that

immigrants' incorporation process did not necessarily result in an abandonment of cultural, social, economic and political ties. In essence it describes a US context in which groups have the right to retain cultural distinctiveness and an atmosphere of mutual respect and tolerance is encouraged (Niemonen, 1999).

Like assimilation theory, multiculturalism moved beyond academic circles to become a normative position in both political and social contexts. Supporters of multiculturalism argued for its incorporation in education curricula and its adoption as criteria in hiring, and college admissions. It was argued that not only should there be an atmosphere of mutual respect and tolerance, but there were normative reasons for working towards achieving pluralistic college campuses, workplaces and schools. By the 1990s, opponents of multiculturalism argued that it was counteracting the achievements of the Civil Rights movement and politicizing racial and ethnic identities. Linda Chavez, one the its most fervent opponents, notes,

The re-racialization of American society that is taking place in the name of multiculturalism is not a progressive movement, but a step backward to the America that existed before *Brown v. Board of Education* and the passage of the major civil rights laws of the 1960s. We are at a critical juncture in our history. Even if we are not, as the multiculturalists claim, about to become a majority minority nation, racial and ethnic diversity in our population is increasing. If we allow race and ethnicity to determine public policy, we invite the kind of cleavages that will pit one group against another in ways that can not be good for the groups themselves or the society we all must live in. (1996)

Although the concept continues to be at the forefront of the rhetoric espoused by state, educational, and economic institutions, at least in part due to its adoption as a policy formulation, multiculturalism has lost much of its empirical validity (Gans, 1999). Its all-encompassing nature makes is very difficult for it to inform theoretical or empirical work.

### **Transnational Networks**

The changing character of U.S. immigration that began in the 1960s away from Europe towards Latin America, as well as advances in communications and transportation technologies enabled more recent immigrants to maintain strong linkages with their societies of origin. Given this new context, by the 1980s, academics began discussing transnational migration as a part of a larger and complex process of globalization. According to authors like Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc, immigrants become transnational when they do not cut-off ties to their countries of origin and/or fully absorb the new culture offered to them by the host nation (1995). Ties to the home country are maintained and encouraged through frequent travel, transfers of funds (i.e. remittances, investments, etc), goods and resources.

Case studies of transnational migrants quickly became the trend in various academic fields as scholars documented the numerous exchanges between migrants and their home countries. Earlier studies focused on material exchanges, examining flows of people, remittances and goods and capital (Portes and Guarnizo 1991; Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1992; Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc 1994; Grasmuck and Pessar 1991; Guarnizo, 1997). Studies also investigated political activism on the part of migrants in their home countries and uncovered networks devoted to the improvement of local communities (Goldring 1996 and González Gutierrez 1995). Later on, scholars like Peggy Levitt (1998) and Alejandro Portes (1996) began moving transnationalism a step further by recognizing that the concept need not be limited to palpable interchanges, but also included ideational and attitudinal linkages. These contributions to the literature demonstrated that the impact of transnationalism was much

more widespread than originally thought, as communities' values, and belief systems, including religion, change based on their interconnections across national boundaries.

While the growth in scholarly work on transnationalism signaled its increasing importance it also resulted in analytical vagueness. In an attempt to clarify what quickly became the murky arena of transnational migration, Nina Glick Schiller revisited the definition in her contribution to the *Handbook of International Migration* (1999). She explains that her usage of the word transnational discusses, "political, economic, social and cultural processes that extend beyond the borders of a particular state, include actors that are not states, but are shaped by the policies and institutional practices of states" (96). Although Glick Schiller's attempt should be commended, transnational migration continues to be an extremely broad concept raising questions as to what criteria should be used to explain "political, economic, social and cultural processes". In fact, the author seems to recognize this as later on in the same article she explains that "it is [not] useful to equate transnational migration with the longings that immigrants may feel for home, if these sentiments are not translated into systematic participation in networks across borders" (96).

While Glick Schiller first defines the concept quite broadly, her later clarification appears to limit transnational migration to activities with identifiable patterns. The scholar's use of the term systematic implies that activities that are occasional or may be very be frequent at certain points in time and decrease in frequency in others are not to be included in the conceptualization. One may then ask, what is considered to be systematic? How often do these activities need to occur in order for them to be viewed as a pattern? This characterization also raises the question whether individuals can be

transmigrants at certain times in their immigrant experience and not at others? If this is the case, then, scholars must be cognizant of this distinction so as to not overestimate the results of a particular community that may appear to epitomize transnational migration at the time of research and depict a very different example at other times. However, Glick Schiller does not clarify these points her piece.

In their article, "Assimilation and Transnationalism: Determinants of Transnational Political Action among Contemporary Migrants," (2003) Alejandro Portes, Luis Guarnizo and William Haller raise similar questions regarding the literature's definition of transnationalism. They write

The problem with this definition is that it does not establish explicit criteria for differentiating those who participate in these activities from those that do not. If the simple act of sending remittances to families or traveling home occasionally qualifies a person as a "transmigrant" the entire field is subject to the charge of banality since it is well known that international migrants have always engaged in these activities (1212-1213).

The scholars correctly argue that while case studies documenting the existence of these linkages are important, it has now become clear that these exchanges are not a new phenomenon. We are more cognizant of these patterns today because scholars have been looking for them and technology facilitates these kinds of activities. However, in order for empirical work to test the impact of these patterns, it is necessary to ascertain who constitutes a true transmigrant. Portes, Guarnizo and Haller take on this challenge describing these individuals as "a new class of immigrants, economic entrepreneurs or political activists who conduct cross-border activities on a regular basis." (1213).

Accepting Portes, Guarnizo and Haller's definition signifies the recognition that most immigrants are not transmigrants. Instead, they are what Glick Schiller would identify as part of a diaspora. However, examining Faist's definition of diaspora

indicates that it is not the best way to describe these individuals either. For Faist, a diaspora has a “vision and remembrance of a lost or an imagined homeland still to be established, often accompanied by a refusal of the receiving society to fully recognize the cultural distinctiveness of community members who are dispersed to many diverse regions of the world” (1999). While clearly this describes a number of post-1960s immigrants in the US, it in no way describes the majority, which are primarily economic migrants.

Finally, Peggy Levitt raises another issue, which deserves attention by the literature on transnational migration. How should scholars examining transnational migration address individual versus collective action? While Portes reminds us that individual actions have important outcomes when considered in the aggregate (2003), this issue too deserves clarification. Manuel Vazquez and Anna Peterson raise the issue in their 2001 volume when discussing the Charismatic Catholic Renewal Movement in El Salvador and among Salvadorans in Washington DC. It was evident that individuals were participating in transnational activities, yet no evidence of webs of collective or institutional activity was found. Therefore, one may question whether the actions of individuals constitute transnationalism or are the mechanisms that the immigrants employ to facilitate their incorporation into US society and retain religious, cultural, social, political and linguistic practices?

Given the debate and the questions surrounding transnationalism, where does this leave the discussion of the model’s definition and its boundaries? A recent volume of the journal *International Migration Review* (2003) assembled a number of articles on the topic and gave scholars the opportunity to address some of the criticisms that have been



raised with respect to the theory of transnational migration. Addressing the matter of the definition of transmigrants, DeWind, Levitt and Vertovec offer the notions of selective transnational practices and selective assimilation. For the authors, these terms refer to the activities of a large number of immigrants who are involved in occasional transnational practices and at the same time adopt core principles of the host society. They agree with Portes, Guarnizo and Haller that transmigrants are truly a separate group, but they are careful to mention the complexity involved in making these determinations. They remind us that in classifying transmigrants, scholars must take into consideration, the level at which transnational activities occur, the types of activities that are involved and whether these activities are formal or informal (569-570).

The volume also makes two other significant clarifications that are particularly important for this research project. First, Levitt, de Wind and Vertovec remind the readers that immigrants and transmigrants, in particular, function within various social fields and these social fields interact with each other. Therefore, transnational practices cannot be examined solely in the home and host country contexts, but instead must also take into account the local, institutional, national and international frameworks in which they occur. In other words, documenting linkages is important, but the field has to move beyond those investigations to uncover the webs of influence that bind immigrants to their receiving and sending contexts. What is most important is that those contexts each have multiple layers, which must be analyzed in order to fully understand transnational migration. For this project this means that even those immigrants that can be considered transmigrants, forge relationships and ties that go beyond the exchanges they maintain between home and host society. Those relationships impact transmigrants lives and we

must pay close attention to them if we are to understand immigrants' incorporation experiences and how they negotiate identity.

Second, in a statement that I feel moves transnational migration forward particularly with regards to acknowledging the link between the model and immigrant incorporation, the authors of the volume acknowledge that transnational migration and assimilation processes are not mutually exclusive of each other. They note, "the kinds of activities in which migrants participate, the institutional arenas where these activities take place, the class resources to which they have access, and their life-cycle stage determined the resulting balance between transnational involvement and assimilation" (Levitt, de Wind and Vertovec, 571). The implicit assumption underlying many of the studies of transnationalism was that indeed transnational migration and assimilation were mutually exclusive. If immigrants were maintaining such strong ties to their countries of origin, then, they were not building strong ties to the country of settlement (Brimelow, 1995). While scholars may not have intended this interpretation, their previous lack of attention to the interchange between host country incorporation and transnational migration validated the claim.

Peggy Levitt's more recent works (2001, 2003) begin to address the concern of the intersection between transnational migration and immigrants' incorporation experiences. Levitt rightly calls for studies "[to] examine the ways in which host country incorporation changes religious ideas and practice, how these changes affect sending-country religious life and how these changes mutually reinforce one another over time" (868). I echo Levitt's call and would add that the analysis should also be concerned with how

transnational migration and religion affect immigrant incorporation and identity formation. This study attempted to move empirical work in that direction.

Until recently the field of transnational migration had been largely unconcerned with investigating the relationship between transnationalism and ethnic identity formation. I have always been somewhat surprised by this disjuncture since it seemed apparent that the choices immigrants made with respect to linking the host and home contexts impact their definition of self in these social fields. Brenda S. A. Yeoh, Katie D. Willis and S. M. Abul Khader Fakhri comment on the intersection between transnational migration and identity formulation stating that

transnational subjects obviously play by a different set of rules since they live in or connect with several communities simultaneously. Their identities, behaviour and values are not limited by location and instead they construct and utilize flexible, personal and national identities. On the one hand, transmigrants formulate transnational identities that both draw on and contest national identities, and which do not 'depend on the isomorphism of citizenship with cultural identity, of work with kinship or territory with soil or of residence with national identification.' On the other hand, transnational identities may also be associated with a sense of 'placelessness' as a result of the discrepancies between citizenship and locality. (2003)

The point here is to paint a picture of the complexity of identity formation, but also to highlight its intersection with transnational migration. Transmigrants may have been expected to maintain multiple national identifications, but the authors caution us that this may not be the case. New or reconstructed identities may or may not draw from national identities, they may be deterritorialized and simply represent shared values, histories, experiences independent of citizenship and place.

The literature on transnational migration has begun to focus its attention on its relationship with immigrant incorporation and identity formation. However, more, larger-scale studies are needed to understand how identities are created in relation to

transnational practices and within transnational contexts. One of the aims of this project was to contribute to the growing body of work in this area, if only on a smaller scale. Given that scholars interested transnational migration have only recently begun to address the links this subject matter has to identity formation, it would be useful to borrow from the theoretical framework offered by the three schools of cultural pluralism in our effort to understand the emergence or reemergence of ethnic identities.

### **Three Schools of Cultural Pluralism**

Prior to the 1970s, much of the work on ethnicity emphasized the experience of the industrialized West with their ethnic populations, usually the products of either colonization or international migration. However, the resurgence of ethnicity resulted in the growth of comparative studies, particularly in the developing world. It is within this context that three competing theories instrumentalism, primordialism, and constructivism emerged. These theories have framed much of the scholarly debate on ethnic identity.

Before embarking on a discussion of these approaches to ethnic identity formation, it is important to mention that the schools of cultural pluralism discussed here are not what is often thought of as cultural pluralism within the context of US scholarship. The latter is a response to the assimilationist model proposing a view of the US' ethnic and racial fabric as one in which new immigrants can achieve substantial levels of economic and political assimilation, while at the same time retaining cultural distinctiveness. While the meaning of cultural pluralism as understood in the US context certainly is relevant to this study, the theoretical approach discussed below refers to the three schools of thought describing the creation or recreation of ethnic identity as developed primarily in the African context.

The instrumentalist perspective appeared in the literature on cultural identity in the 1970s. In attempting to understand why individuals participated in ethnic organizations or movements, theorists emphasized the role of the social, economic and political goals of self-interested individuals. For structuralists, "self-interested individuals are led to form ethnic identities in order to preserve or to extend their individual interests" (Stack, 1986: 17). In essence, ethnic identity is characterized as any other social or political identity. An individual's membership in an ethnic group serves the same purpose, as does her/his membership in a socio-economic class or a political party.

At a time when many social scientists were involved in a debate between structure and agency, rational choice theorists attached a new spin to the instrumentalist perspective. Crawford Young describes this new application

For the rational choice theorist, "instrumentalism" nurtured the notion that ethnic groups were calculating, self-interested collective actors, maximizing material values through the vehicle of communal identity, rational because the ethnic group was at once large enough to seek an effective voice, but provided an exclusionary principle permitting limitation of benefits to members. (1994: 22)

Thus, for scholars like Robert Bates (1983), Michael Hechter (1986), Alvin Rabushka and Kenneth Shepsle (1972), ethnicity is interpreted as a tool. Ethnic identity enables rational utility maximizers to manipulate ethnic ties for economic and political gains.

Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan, two of the earliest proponents of instrumentalism, used the theory to characterize ethnic groups as interest groups. In their book, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians and Irish of New York City* (1963), the authors note

Human groups do not exist in nature... They are chosen and whether one chooses to see oneself as Third World, Black, Negro, is not determined by either biology or sociology. It is a free act, even if constrained by social influences...the ethnic and

racial groups of the city are also interest groups based on jobs and occupations and possessions.... owing to the concrete nature of their jobs (or lack of jobs), their businesses, and their professions, they are also defined by interest. And since they are interest groups, and since all policies affect interests differently, they also affect group relations. (1970: xiv, lxxiii-iv)

Given a context of limited resources and uneven distribution of power and wealth, ethnic identification replaced social class (Conzen et al, 4). Therefore, like lobbying organizations, ethnic groups in New York City used ethnicity to gain concessions from the state apparatus.

This approach provided scholars with an explanation for the persistence of ethnicity. Ethnic identity was a means for politically, economically and socially marginalized groups to obtain benefits from the state. Yet, the instrumentalist's approach underlying assumption of calculated self-interest could not explain the dramatic images of ethnic cleansing and large-scale violence becoming common throughout the world in the 1980s and 1990s in the name of ethnic homogeneity. How could such senseless events be explained based purely on the basis of material self-interest? Discussing the politicization of ethnic identity Robert Price critiqued instrumentalism stating

Racial identities, like those of ethnicity and religion, are so affectively laden and racial/ethnic ideologies have such a strong anti-instrumentalist component, that there will likely always be some racial/ethnic entrepreneurs who pursue their agendas independently of any short-term utilitarian calculus. (1997: 154)

For Price, then, the possible manipulation of ethnic identity is not a product of the rationality of the individual, but of his/her "affective ties" to an ethnic or cultural identity. This is an important distinction that perhaps had not been made clear by the scholars of the instrumentalist school.

In his book, *The Ethnic Revival* (1981), Anthony D. Smith traced historical incidences of ethnic conflict and the rise of nationalism. Like Price, he emphasized the importance of elites in the manipulation of ethnicity for political goals. Smith writes

By appealing to shared beliefs and symbols, these elites found that they could mobilise much larger populations without relying so heavily on coercive methods.... The circumstances of invasion in antiquity and the medieval era with its ensuing destruction of crops and pillaging of villages in the countryside, tended to push a sullen and fragmented peasantry into the arms of any rulers who could effectively defend them against such depredations. (74-75)

While recognizing the manipulation of ethnicity, the calculated action is not on the part of the average individual, but instead the action of elites. Therefore, for the masses membership in an ethnic group is not necessarily based on utilitarian self-interest, but perhaps on other impulses. This is a direct contradiction to the perspective expressed by Glazer and Moynihan, who viewed membership as a free choice on the part of individuals. Yet, if membership is not a choice, then, what factors could explain the rise in identification on the basis of ethnicity? According to the primordialist school of thought, one possible alternative impulse is that of the ascriptive bonds of kinship and/or brotherhood.

Primordialism is the oldest of the three schools of cultural pluralism. After a decline, it re-emerged to contest the assumptions of the instrumentalist model. Primordialism emphasized the psychological and emotional feelings behind ethnic identification. Scholars like Clifford Geertz (1973) and Pierre Van den Berghe (1978) believed that it was cultural identity, which completed the human being. Cultural identity is at the center of the human's social existence, for it is the primary means of differentiating between "us" and the "other" (Young, 1994: 23).

Barbara Ballis Lal notes that the differentiation between “us” and the “other,” the focus of the primordialist perspective, is based on the assumption that “identity is internal and persists through change. Identity is fundamentally an “accrued confidence” in the “inner sameness” and continuity of one’s own being which is rooted in physical appearance and common culture, i.e. shared language, religion, origin and history” (1995: 432). This premise has proven to be primordialism’s most important contribution, but also its limitation. While this approach provided the affective tie lacking in the instrumentalist perspective, it also characterized identity virtually as an inflexible and unchanging physiological given. Thus, according to primordialism, groups identifying on the basis of ethnic or cultural identities are virtually predestined to do so. Moreover, as a result of this premise, ethnic conflict could easily be explained as the product of backward primordial ties. It is out of this critique that constructivism emerged.

The constructivist school originated to provide an alternative to both primordialism and instrumentalism. Constructivists argued that scholars needed to question how ethnic or cultural identities arose, instead of what were the causes of group action. In essence, they argued that the focus should be on understanding the conditions, the circumstances and the actors who together created what today is known as ethnic or cultural identity. Crawford Young elegantly describes the constructivist approach stating, “The heart of the matter, then, was to perceive ethnicity as manufactured rather than as a given, an innovative act of creative imagination” (24). Perhaps what most distinguishes the constructivist approach from the other two schools is its dynamic character. Ethnic or cultural identities are understood to be in constant flux, as individuals and communities



construct and reconstruct how they view themselves. Identity construction is thus seen as a continually evolving process.

One of the most recognized works of the constructivist approach is Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1991). Anderson attempted to explain the persistence of nationalism as a response to the failed predictions of both Marxist and liberal social thought. At the center of the scholar's explanation is the theory that nations are cultural artifacts or "imagined communities." Anderson notes

I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.... The nation is imagined as limited because even the largest of them encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations.... It is imagined as sovereign because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm.... Finally, it is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. (5-7)

Through extensive historical analysis, the author outlined key developments, such as the decline of feudal society, the proliferation of printing presses, the institutionalization of modern languages and the rise of capitalism, which were the main engines driving the creation of the modern nation-state.

For Anderson, what defines "nation-ness" is a combination of historical events and created and shared traditions, beliefs, and experiences. In contrast to primordialism, identities are not givens, but the ongoing products of actors' experiences and their contexts. This is a key point because parallel to instrumentalism, Benedict Anderson recognized the role of agency in the creation of nations. Discussing the national independence movements of the Western hemisphere, the scholar writes

neither economic interest, Liberalism, nor the Enlightenment could, or did, create in themselves, the kind or shape, of imagined community to be defended from these regimes' depredations;...In accomplishing this task, pilgrim creole functionaries and provincial creole printmen played the decisive historical role. (65)

However, the author's validation of agency does not translate into an acceptance of the assumption that identity is primarily the result of individual, material self-interest.

Instead, although approaching it from a different perspective, Benedict Anderson, like Smith and Price, calls attention to the important role of elites in framing debates in terms of ethnic or cultural identity.

Like Anderson, Joane Nagel highlighted the role of individuals in the process of identity construction. She argues that the most useful way of understanding ethnic and cultural identity is through recognition that ethnicity "reflects the creative choices of individuals and groups as they define themselves" (1994: 152). However, she cautions that the construction of ethnicity is a process in which both insiders (members of a particular ethnic, language or cultural group) and outsiders (non-members) are involved.

Just as ethnic identity is both volitional and ascribed, ethnicity is constructed by individuals and ethnic groups themselves as well as by social, economic and political outsiders. Ethnic boundaries are constructed from within and from without, propped up by both internal and external pressures. (1996: 32)

Thus, external forces can also limit the fluidity of identity construction. Though, in the United States, this is most evident in the case of African-Americans, the imposition of racial and ethnic categories by outsiders is also present in the case of Latinos/Hispanics.

Latinos/Hispanics also have to respond to a category established by outsiders (primarily the state) and the advantages and disadvantages that may be attached to such a category. Padilla's study argued that these potential benefits are the catalysts for Latino/Hispanic identity (1985). Nagel agrees that "ethnic decision-making has both rational and non-rational components; ethnic identification can arise from calculations of

profit as well as from personal meaning” (23). Yet, she adds “an individual’s ethnic affiliation at any point in time depends on the ethnic identities available to him or her in a particular situation. Sometimes there is a choice and sometimes not” (1986: 96).

Nagel raises an important distinction that aids readers in conceptualizing the three schools of cultural pluralism. The fact that a group may adopt a category due, at least in part, to state or societal incentives or pressures should not be necessarily interpreted as the calculated choice of a self-interested individual. Instrumentalism fails to recognize that it may be the case that individuals and communities appropriate an imposed label and reinvent it into something that has real meaning for them. As Spickard and Burroughs stated, “When people take on, create or assign an ethnic identity...they take on, assign or create a story, a narrative of some sort that captures the central understandings about what it means to be a member of that group” (2000: 42). Thus, membership in a particular ethnic group may have very little to do with material self interest, but instead have more to do with acquired or constructed feelings and emotions.

Contrary to primordialism’s argument, these are not affective ties that are inherent to individuals. Instead, they are part of immigrants’ adaptation and settlement experiences. Therefore, one can imagine that immigrants of different nationalities, sharing a common language or culture could build bonds that in time would result in some form of shared identification. Clearly this identification would be a choice made by these individuals, but one whose primary cause was not material self-interest, but perhaps a need for acceptance or a feeling of camaraderie. This is precisely the kind of scenario that this author believes best explains the emergence of a Latino/Hispanic identity. As of yet, for the majority, there are no clear advantages for choosing to identify as Latino or

Hispanic. Yet, as the Latin American immigrant community grows, it is undergoing a process in which bonds of culture and language are constructed, which will serve as the basis for the narratives that will define this emerging identity.

The three schools of cultural pluralism each provide a distinct view of identity construction. Instrumentalism's contribution has been to explain the emergence of ethnic identification as a result of material self-interest. Rational individuals recognize the benefits afforded to them by identifying on the basis of ethnic or cultural identities. However, instrumentalism cannot explain the extremism that has been associated with ethnic mobilization or politicization. While it can be argued that for some elites such extremist acts can be the source of political, social and economic gain, it is difficult to make the same argument for the thousands of individuals who carry out horrendous acts of violence around the world. In addition, even in the case described by Padilla, where expected benefits were associated with ethnic identification, instrumentalism can be used to explain the possible catalyst for Latino/Hispanic identity, but not the possible appropriation or reinvention of the meaning of that identity.

Primordialism emphasized the emotional ties lacking in the instrumentalist model, but in so doing it characterized identities as unchanging elements of individuals' psyches. The primordialist perspective enabled us to see identities as more than just the result of material self-interest. However, it failed to recognize that identities change in response to individuals' life experiences and more importantly, that ethnic or cultural identities are not biological givens, but instead social constructions.

It is precisely the notion that identities are social constructions that has been one of the most important contributions of the constructivist school. While constructivists allow

agency in their analysis of identity construction, they caution against misrepresenting agency as rational self-interest. As the case of Latinos demonstrates, individuals may choose to identify in a particular way, but that choice is one that is not without limitations. Furthermore, as constructivists argue, Latinos' choice to identify ethnically may have no material advantages attached to it, but rather more emotional or affective rewards.

### **Literature on Latino/Hispanic Identity**

While the media, marketing firms and lobby organizations like the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) and the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) often tout the unity of the Latinos/Hispanics, the emergence of a unified Latino/Hispanic community, sharing a Latino/Hispanic identity has yet to become an empirical reality. Past national surveys have demonstrated that Latinos/Hispanics primarily identify in terms of national origin (de la Garza et al., 1992). Therefore, if individuals of Latin American origin choose not to refer to themselves using the pan-ethnic category, what evidence is there of a "Latino/Hispanic" community or even a potential "Latino/Hispanic" voting bloc?

The most commonly used data source on Latinos/Hispanics is the Latino National Political Survey (LNPS) conducted between 1988 and 1990. The LNPS was a pioneering project since it was the first national survey focusing on Mexican, Cuban and Puerto Rican attitudes on numerous political and social topics. The LNPS included a self-identification question and its results confirmed what many scholars already suspected. "While terms like *Hispanic* or *Latino* were being used increasingly by Latino political elites to characterize themselves, their issues, and their organizations...researchers found that pan-ethnic consciousness was weak in the Latino population" (García, 1996: 100).

The LNPS findings appeared to settle some of the immediate questions surrounding the acceptance and use of pan-ethnic terms. The results seemed to suggest quite clearly that most of those referred to as Latinos/Hispanics rejected that terminology. Yet, that turned out to be a premature conclusion. A closer analysis of the data uncovered evidence of support for pan-ethnicity among respondents (Jones-Correa and Leal, 1996). Due to the importance of these findings for this study, a more in-depth analysis will follow. However, for the purposes of this discussion, some of LNPS' more palpable limitations should be mentioned.

The LNPS did not include Latinos/Hispanics who are not of Puerto Rican, Mexican-American or Cuban-American ancestry. Clearly the context of the time period during which the project was undertaken must be considered. Yet, given, the dramatic growth of other Latin American origin groups throughout the nation, (i.e., Dominicans in the northeast, South Americans in south Florida, Central Americans in the southwest), it is difficult to embark in contemporary generalizations without broadening the scope of the study. In addition, the survey predated the 1996 Immigration Act. The apparent anti-immigrant components of this legislation mobilized significant sectors of the Latino/Hispanic community, which could have affected the dynamics of pan-ethnic identification.

Yet, even with these limitations, the LNPS was a groundbreaking study, since it was the only project attempting to collect national data on persons of Latin American origin living in the US. Furthermore, other than the decennial census, the LNPS was the only study asking a self-identification question on a national scale. The inclusion of such a question was important because since the 1980s, US academics involved in Latino

studies have been engaged in a scholarly debate about the existence (or lack thereof) of a Latino/Hispanic identity, the conditions under which such an identity could emerge and the appropriateness of the terms Hispanic and Latino.

One of the earliest works on the subject of Latino/Hispanic identity is Felix Padilla's *Latino Ethnic Consciousness* (1985). Padilla's study was one of the first attempts at seeking empirical evidence of the existence of pan-ethnicity and the context in which it developed. His study examined the experiences of Mexican-American and Puerto Rican activists in Chicago during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Padilla described pan-ethnic identity as situationally-specific. For the author, this type of identity strategically emerged in response to specific conditions, particularly those of inequality and prejudice. When more than one population believed they shared these unjust conditions and the State's policies supported established ethnic categories, there was an incentive for ethnic group mobilization (61). Padilla wrote, "Latino identity is similar to political ethnicity, a manipulative device used to gain advantages or overcome disadvantages in society" (64).

For Padilla, Latino ethnic consciousness was a tool with which Puerto Rican and Mexican-Americans counteracted discrimination, their disadvantaged economic, social and political status and police injustice (68). Using this instrumentalist framework, Padilla described two subtypes of Latino/Hispanic identity, 1) the cultural-political type and 2) socio-political type. Community leaders who wanted to broaden the scope of Latino/Hispanic identity to include all Spanish-speaking groups under the rationale of a shared language and culture used the cultural-political type (73). The socio-political type

depicted those individuals who ascribed a pan-ethnic term only to those who were involved in social and political activism to combat injustice (75-76).

For those of us interested in the field of Latino/Hispanic ethnic consciousness, Padilla's study is a classic and necessary component of any literature review. Yet, an examination of Padilla's study uncovers that a central aspect of the research was one of the study's most important limitations. The sample chosen by the author consisted of community leaders who expressed what Latino/Hispanic identity represented for them and their communities. Yet, in this study the members of those communities were not asked to self-identify or to express individually what pan-ethnicity meant for them. Community leaders have a vested interest in making pan-ethnicity a symbol for political action. Research has documented how activists have used culture in the past to strengthen popular mobilization (Snow et al., 1986 and Benford, 1988, 1992 as cited by Nagel 1994: 165). Thus, organizers' views cannot be used to represent those of the larger population. Community leaders' responses can provide the reader with a general sense of the community's attitudes on the issue of Latino/Hispanic identity. They cannot be used, however, as empirical evidence in favor or against of pan-ethnic identification.

Another shortcoming is the scholar's introduction of two forms of pan-ethnicity. While Padilla maintains his view that Latino/Hispanic identity is a strategic response to conditions of inequality, he complicates his argument by describing the cultural-political type of identity as primordial. He writes "supporters of the cultural-political view attempt to widen the boundaries of the Latino ethnic group to include all Spanish speaking groups. These conceptual forms correspond to a primordial connotation of ethnicity...they chose to elevate one element of culture (Spanish language) into the main



pillar of Latino ethnic identification" (74). This reader is left wondering whether the author is arguing that Latino/Hispanic identity is primordial or instrumentalist or both?

In addition, the assertion that individuals who emphasize shared cultural traits "chose to elevate one element of culture" appears misguided. For most Latin American immigrants, adaptation to the US is a difficult and often times lonely process. Linguistic or cultural traits may be the only means they have to relate to others in an unknown and perhaps unwelcome environment. Therefore, elevating language or culture may not be a matter of choice, but a mechanism for survival.

Finally, Padilla correctly describes his results as "the politicization of a situational Latino ethnic identity." Categorizing his findings in such a way has important implications for the literature. The literature on Latino/Hispanic identity has tended to frame the debate in either primordial (cultural) or instrumentalist (rational choice) terms (Padilla, 1985, Oboler, 1992, Gímenez, 1992, Calderón, 1992). Latino/Hispanic identity is either a shared ancestry, values and beliefs transplanted to the US or a political mobilization strategy. Padilla found a politicized Latino/Hispanic identity. Yet, the problem lies in that it is inconsequential to speak about the (re)construction of an ethnicity without understanding the meaning that identity has for those who carry it. That meaning is what we obtain when we examine the cultural aspect of ethnicity. Nagel writes, "Culture dictates the appropriate and inappropriate content of a particular ethnicity and designates the language, religion, belief system, art, music, dress, traditions, and lifeways that constitute an authentic ethnicity" (161).

Given Padilla's sample of community activists, it was not surprising that Padilla's findings reflect a politicized Latino/Hispanic identity. Yet, Padilla fails to address that

culture enabled organizers to strategically frame issues in terms of the larger population, Hispanic or Latino, instead of the specific national origin groups. The author's dismissal of the cultural element as a reflection of a primordial understanding of ethnicity reduces Latino/Hispanic identity to a shallow manipulation of a small group reacting to state incentives.

Second, by focusing only on those that are strategically using ethnicity for political mobilization purposes, Padilla provides the reader with the meaning the leadership attributes to Latino/Hispanic identity and not what that identity means for the larger population. Therefore, we may ask whether the instrumental identity Padilla found is truly representative of the communities he studied or a reflection of the sample he chose? Furthermore, while we may agree that strategic considerations are key to understanding Latino/Hispanic identity, does that then signify that identity is void of cultural meaning simply because it is politicized? Moreover, based on Padilla's results, are we to expect for Latino/Hispanic identity everywhere to result in politicization?

After the publication of Padilla's book, the debate on Latino/Hispanic identity intensified. Thus, in the Fall 1992 the journal *Latin American Perspectives* devoted an entire issue to the subject, entitled "The Politics of Ethnic Construction: Hispanic, Chicano, Latino...?". Martha Giménez, one of the contributors to this issue, argued that the pan-ethnic label not only homogenized an extremely diverse population, but, more importantly, blurred the distinction between groups in the US with a history of oppression (i.e., Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans) and other Latin American origin groups who have not suffered those injustices. For the author, "the tacit assumption of a Hispanic ethnicity or a 'Hispanicity' common to Latin Americans and people of Mexican

and Puerto Rican descent reflected not only a shallow concept of culture but a pervasive racism” (1992: 10).

Gimenez’ article made some valuable points. Her argument contained a genuine concern and, thus, warned that historical minorities may be adversely affected when they were lumped together with more recent Latin American arrivals. Yet, Gimenez also was concerned about class and the impact negative stereotypes about minorities could have on other Latin Americans, such as herself. Gimenez noted

These labels...(1) reduce people to a set of stereotyped, generally negative traits which presumably define their culture and identity and predict a give set of negative behaviors (e.g., high rates of crime, drug addiction, out-of-wedlock child-bearing, welfare dependency, etc.), (2) they reduce people to interchangeable generic entities, negating the qualitative differences between, for example, persons of Puerto Rican descent who have lived for generations in New York City and newly arrived immigrants from Chile or some other South or Central American country and (3) they reinforce racism in the society as a whole by encouraging the perception of people in racial/ethnic terms rather than in such terms as social class or national origin. (8-9)

One of the first observations that can be made of this discussion was the fixed manner in which identities were portrayed. Most scholarship on the subject has accepted that identities are fluid and constantly changing. The fact that negative stereotypes may be attached to a particular identity does not necessarily mean that identity cannot be reconstructed to highlight the more positive aspects of a particular community. Perhaps, for some individuals, the negative traits Gimenez mentioned will always be attached to persons of Latin American origin. Yet, presuming that likely would be the case for the majority, in the future, demonstrated an overly pessimistic and static view of identity.

In addition, Gimenez’ assertion that pan-ethnic terms “reduce people to interchangeable generic entities” suggested that the terms “Latino” and “Hispanic” were necessarily limited and narrow. Even if one agrees, that upon arrival, the South

American immigrant might not have much in common with the second or third generation Puerto Rican, one may wonder whether it was not likely that, in time, they would come to share some experiences in their mutual context? Moreover, was it not possible for Latino/Hispanic identity to highlight shared traits and at the same time capture the diversity of populations whose journey north had brought them shared experiences as immigrants in this country?

Two other contributors to the 1992 volume, Suzanne Oboler and José Calderón shared Gímenez' interest in class. However, their analysis presented a different picture of how class (and in Oboler's article, race and gender) affected Latino/Hispanic identity. In Oboler's analysis of garment industry workers in New York City, middle-class individuals recognized the negative connotations attached to the Hispanic label, but applied it since it was what the larger society who had imposed it on them. Working class persons, on the other hand, emphasized the stereotypes attached to the term and were less likely to use it as a self-identifier (1992: 23).

Oboler was careful to distance herself from the primordialist argument by characterizing Latino/Hispanic self-identification as a "conscious choice" and a "political decision" (32). In addition, she addressed the question of what a pan-ethnic identity was to represent. She wrote "The richness of the Latino ethos lies precisely in incorporating the individual life histories and experiences as processes of being and becoming – in recognizing and acknowledging the internalized others in the process of defining self" (31). Oboler suggested that the meaning of Latino/Hispanic identity was to be found in creating a self that was representative of the diverse selves represented in Latin America and the Caribbean. Thus, the Latino/Hispanic identity should be a broad assortment of

many individual selves. In my opinion, this was the most important contribution of Oboler's article, for her analysis began to broaden the lenses with which we view Latino/Hispanic identity.

Calderón, in his article, focused on the class differences between city administrators and organizers at the neighborhood level. The former preferred the term Hispanic because they saw themselves as members of an "integrated middle-class community" where ethnicity played a very marginal role (1992: 41). In contrast, neighborhood organizers preferred the term Latino because it symbolized the common struggles facing working class persons of Latin American origin irrespective of country or time of arrival. For Calderón the term Latino offered more hope for pan-ethnic unity. Nevertheless, he cautioned that, "pan-ethnic unity for collective action and the development of a historically distinct and separate ethnic identity are, however, two different things" (43). Here Calderón suggested a distinction similar to that proposed by Padilla. This writer does not disagree with the notion of distinguishing a politicized identity from a non-politicized one. On the contrary, it is vital to distinguish those characteristics because not all identities share them. However, the question remains as to whether it is useful to discuss a politicized identity in the absence of its necessary cultural element?

While an insightful piece, Calderón's sample also raised questions about how representative his findings were. Calderón's choice of city council members and administrators and neighborhood activists limited the applicability of his findings to other populations. Therefore, using these two groups could only tell us something about how different segments of a community's leadership was responding to and/or constructing

pan-ethnic labels. A broader sample could have provided some important information about how the average individual addressed these issues in daily life.

The second half of the 1990s witnessed a substantial increase in the literature addressing Latino/Hispanic identity. Suzanne Oboler's book, *Ethnic Labels, Latino Lives* (1995) intended to disaggregate Latino/Hispanic cultural identities from what she believed was the need for political mobilization (xviii). Oboler documented the Puerto Rican and Mexican American history of struggle for equality and social justice in the United States and like Giménez, used that history as a basis for her critique of the inclusion of other Latin American immigrants into the Latino or Hispanic category. "The inclusion of Latin American immigrants as instant "Hispanic ethnics" is at best reinforcing Latin American cultural traditions and language and at worst once again rewriting the respective histories of Chicano and Puerto Rican populations" (86).

Oboler recognized the effect that a shared culture and language can have on constructing Latino/Hispanic identity. However, she cautioned that "these very real shared linguistic and cultural commonalities should not be confused with automatic adherence to political and ideological panethnicism" (136). Oboler's argument was similar to that of Calderón, but almost reversed. While he suggested that strategic pan-ethnicity for political purposes did not constitute a Latino/Hispanic identity, Oboler's statement implied that a pan-ethnic Latino/Hispanic identity was necessarily political.

Based on Calderón's argument Latino/Hispanic identity was nothing more than a strategy for mobilization. For Oboler it was that mobilization that held the key to a potential pan-ethnic identity. The problem with Calderón's argument has already been discussed and need not be repeated. What limited Oboler was that she set the minimum

criteria for accepting the notion of a Latino/Hispanic identity at politicization. Thus, if Latino/Hispanic identity was not politicized it did not exist. Yet, the findings of this project provide evidence to the contrary.

Moreover, Oboler suggested that Latino/Hispanic identity required political and ideological convergence. Yet, could we argue that Puerto Rican and Mexican American communities (who both Giménez and Oboler argue are traditional minorities) have achieved such an adherence to sets of political and ideological beliefs? Oboler devoted much of her book to a discussion of the impact of racial and class differences on the concept of Latino/Hispanic identity. Are these differences not present within the Puerto Rican and Mexican American communities? If they are, then, they must influence their political and ideological beliefs. Can we then, use that argument to deny the existence of a Chicano, Mexican American or Puerto Rican identity? I believe that most scholars would agree that such identities do exist, even if Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans have not emerged as unified voting blocs in cities like Los Angeles and New York. Therefore, is a higher standard being applied to the existence of a Latino/Hispanic identity? If so, we may wonder why?

Oboler revisited this topic in her contribution to the book *Transnational Latino Communities* (2002). While Oboler is much more open to the emergence of a Latino identity (the term Hispanic would not be included in her description) she again defines it as a social movement. Like Padilla, Oboler is looking for a politicized identity that recognizes and struggles against the discrimination experienced by many Latinos/Hispanics. Therefore, Oboler concludes that "more than solely a culturally dictated fact of life, identifying oneself as Latino/a and participating in a Latino social

movement is a political decision” (86). While I acknowledge that Latino/Hispanic identity has the potential to be a “political decision,” these data do not support that claim. Only US born Latinos/Hispanics or those who are members of the 1.5 generation<sup>1</sup> recognized the politicized nature of the terms Latino and Hispanic. However, it is likely that Paterson’s context as a city with a still growing foreign born population affects these results.

In a more recent contribution to the edited volume *Latino Social Movements* (1999), Gímenez expresses similar concerns to those mentioned in the 1992 collection on the topic regarding how a pan-ethnic Latino identity can be internalized by a majority of Latinos/Hispanics. Gímenez recognizes that identities are social constructions, but gives little importance to the role that agency can play in identity creation and recreation. She writes

Social movements and state intervention can result in the construction of new identities, but these also trigger the experience of recognition, as if the interpellation had the power to make the pieces of individuals’ lives suddenly fit into a pattern that is objectively new from the standpoint of the observer (i.e. politically constructed, the effect of macro level processes that cannot be reduced to the subject’s agency or intentionality) but seems at the same time to have been always already there, as a primordial aspect of the subject’s identity. (173)

Gímenez’ Marxist structural perspective inhibits her from acknowledging that role that individuals and communities have in creating their own histories. It is for this reason that she concludes that Latino identity is only likely to be adopted “working class communities and work places, in ethnic enclaves where employed, underemployed, unemployed, and poor people live together” (176). While I agree with the assertion that a

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<sup>1</sup>The 1.5 generation is a term coined by Alejandro Portes and Ruben Rumbaut describing individuals who immigrated to the US as youth. Though they have been raised in the US, the fact that they have memories of spending their earliest years in their native country keeps them in a state of “in-betweeness;” they are not first generation immigrants and neither are they second generation. Please see Portes and Rumbaut (1996) for a full discussion.



Latino identity is most likely to be adopted by those who share life experiences as immigrants in the US, Gímenez fails to recognize that socio-economic class does not erase the barriers of race and ethnicity that are so prevalent in the US. Therefore, her belief that upper-class Latin Americans have more in common with “US people of similar class standing than with working class or poor Latinos” (169) is only partly true depending at least in part to the phenotype of those upper-class Latin Americans and the context in which they are encountering “US people of similar class standing.” Research has demonstrated that unlike in Latin American countries, where upward social mobility can “whiten” subjects, in the US, racial categorizations are much stricter. Finally, this perspective also fails to consider the experience of the second generation, which will inevitably struggle with ethnic and racial classifications regardless of their socio-economic standing.

A 1996 article by Michael Jones-Correa and David Leal made an important contribution to the literature on Latino/Hispanic identity for two reasons. First the article re-examined the LNPS data and suggested that there may have been more empirical evidence of pan-ethnic self-identification than once thought. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the authors concluded that the analysis on Latino/Hispanic identity thus far had failed to recognize the possibility of multiple or complimentary identities co-existing. Simply reporting self-identification responses without delving deeper into how identities can be layered would not produce accurate results.

Jones-Correa and Leal approached the data from the perspective of the possibility of multiple and layered identities. Thus, they uncovered that although 2.9% of respondents preferred a pan-ethnic term as their first or only identifier, 52.3% used more

than one identifier. Fourteen percent of the sample reported a pan-ethnic term as their primary identifier. However, when primary and secondary identifiers were combined, 41.7% of those surveyed were using a pan-ethnic term as either a primary or secondary identity. Jones-Correa and Leal noted that the substantial jump in use of pan-ethnic terms from 2.9% to 41.7% suggested, "pan-ethnic identifiers are elastic" (220).

Jones-Correa and Leal's contribution to the debate was two-fold. First, their findings asked us to view identity formation as a layering process in which multiple identities can and do co-exist. In response to each context, individuals negotiated which identities surface at particular times. Secondly, their results illustrated that neither instrumentalism nor primordialism effectively explained Latino/Hispanic identity. The wrote

Instead, Latino panethnicity is a complex phenomenon, differing not only by a range of demographic characteristics but also among those using panethnicity as a primary or secondary identification. These findings suggest that one needs to think about panethnicity as part of a constellation of individuals' multiple identifications and that individuals may manage these identities in different ways. (218)

Thus, understanding Latino/Hispanic identity required that we leave behind assimilationist paradigms and begin imagining this new identity not as replacing national (regional, religious, etc) identities, but as complementing existing identities.

This theme of multiple, layered identities has gained acceptance in the more recent literature on Latino/Hispanic identity (Rodriguez 2000, Alcoff and Mendieta, 2000, Schutte, 2000, Trueba, 1999, Jones-Correa, 1998, Fox, 1996). Henrique Trueba (1999) discussed the emergence of a pan-ethnic identity stating, "Latinos are facing not simply a change in ethnic identity rather it seems to be a complicated process whereby Latinos retain multiple identities, multiple interactional settings and diverse "situated selves" at one point in time" (12).

In *Between Two Nations* (1998) Jones-Correa revisited this issue, linking it to what he argued were the pressures immigrants face to choose between US society and their countries of origin. Jones-Correa noted that

Latin American identities are shaped not just by the choices they make in the US but also by the weight of identity choices made in the past...immigrants strategically manipulate the disjunctures among these competing identities to maximize their own autonomy. Ethnic identity can reflect individual choices in a way that highly institutionalized formal politics cannot. For this reason, immigrants turn to ethnic identity in order to escape the mutually incompatible alternative of either "becoming American" or staying attached to their countries of origin. (123)

For Jones-Correa then, the negotiation of multiple identities was a mechanism by which immigrants delayed or opted out of making undesirable choices. Geoffrey Fox proposed a similar argument stating, "Becoming Hispanic is the only way open to them to be Americans, real authentic Americans with dignity" (241). Both of these interpretations raised a follow-up question. Did the authors view the negotiation and application of pan-ethnicity as a temporary or permanent response to a specific context? If they intended for pan-ethnicity to be temporary, what would replace it? If pan-ethnicity were permanent what would the end result look like? Investigating these questions is important, for either alternative would have implications for the development of Latino/Hispanic identity.

The works mentioned above have examined the existence of a pan-Latino identity from the perspective of first generation immigrants. Although there continues to be a steady flow of Latin American immigrants into the US, there are growing numbers of young adults who make up the second generation, in addition to the third and fourth generation descendants that inhabit certain regions of the country. Research on incorporation has demonstrated that the assimilation process accelerates with the second

generation (or even with the 1.5 generation), therefore this group will be instrumental in adopting or rejecting the notion of a pan-Latino identity.

Alejandro Portes and Rubén Rumbaut have carried out the most extensive studies of the second generation involving Latinos/Hispanics (2001). The longitudinal study, which surveyed students while in eighth and ninth grade and then revisited them at the end of their high school careers, initially supported the preference for national origin (27.5%) and hyphenated identities (40.8%); only 15.8% of all students self-identified pan-ethnically. Yet, interesting shifts occurred in students' responses during the second intervention. By the second survey, the percentage of students preferring national origin had increased to 34.6 those choosing hyphenated identities had declined to 30.6 and pan-ethnic self-identification had increased to 26.5. This fact is important because while the expectation of assimilationists is that since most of these young people undergone a fast linguistic assimilation, then, presumably they would also follow the same path towards adoption of an American identity (156). However, the research shows instead that more youth are choosing to reassert national identities or adopting notions of pan-ethnicity.

In this sample, Mexicans were much less likely to self-identify pan-ethnically. While in most other groups pan-ethnic identification increased with age, Mexicans instead chose to assert national identities. It is probable that factors, such as the constant flow of new Mexican immigrants (in the city of San Diego where the one part of research was carried out), the predominance of the Mexican population in that context and the backlash of Proposition 187, all contributed to these results. Mexicans are so numerically dominant in the southwestern US, that a culturally-based pan-Latino identity would seem unnecessary, since most Latinos/Hispanics are likely to be Mexican. In addition, the

second, third and fourth generations are constantly bombarded with “refresher courses” in “Mexicanness” brought by the constant flow of new immigrants. Finally as the authors noted, Proposition 187 galvanized Mexican identity especially among those who felt that measure was unjust and targeted California’s Mexican population (160).

The Portes and Rumbaut data do not report information on multiple or layered identities. Therefore, it is possible that even those individuals who preferred other identities would also identify pan-ethnically if given the choice to do so. Regardless of this possible, Portes and Rumbaut’s analysis demonstrates the complexities involved in the self-definition process, particularly at this early age. I decided not to examine the second generation (although some interviews and surveys were carried out) precisely due to the expected shifts that Portes and Rumbaut reported. Yet what is important about their research is that the data contradicts the expected pattern toward identification assimilation and uncovers the daily struggles of these individuals who are straddling multiple societies at once and at the same time are trying to form image of the self.

What can be seen in this discussion on the important literature on Latino/Hispanic identity is a progression of thought by which scholars have gradually broadened the lenses from which one can view pan-ethnicity. In the 1970s and 1980s, authors were looking for concrete evidence of the existence of a Latino/Hispanic identity. For pan-ethnicity to exist, individuals had to use self-identify using a Hispanic or Latino as their primary identity. If such evidence was available, identity was either cultural or political, both of which lacked true meaning. By the 1990s, however, the scholarship began to recognize the complexity of identity formation. The fact that Latino/Hispanic identity

was not the primary identifier for some should not be simply understood as a rejection of pan-ethnicity.

Although scholarship has begun to accept the existence of Latino/Hispanic identity, there is still a lack of empirical evidence investigating the role of race and class in its emergence. In addition, the debate on the topic also needs to address the conceptualization of some authors (Oboler and Gimenez, for example) identifying Latino/Hispanic identity as a social movement. While it is certainly possible this is the case, we might question whether it is appropriate to equate pan-Latino identity with a social movement when indeed it may also be an expression of shared histories and cultural, linguistic, and moral values? It is important to take a step backward to closely examine the meanings and usage of pan-ethnicity and how those are expressed in different contexts prior to blindly categorizing it as a politicized identity. Finally, as Jones Correa and Leal cautioned, we need to consider the possibility of the negotiation of multiple identities, its causes and the implications of this process for the meaning of pan-ethnicity.

### **Literature on Religion and Identity**

Finally, this project required that we briefly examined some of the literature on the role of religion in shaping pan-ethnic identity. Above, we have already discussed the importance of culture in providing meaning for ethnic identity (see Nagel 1994). For Latinos/Hispanics in the US, religion is one of the fundamental tools in cultural maintenance. Therefore, some familiarity with how the literature understands the role of religion in the process of cultural retention would aid in framing the questions this study aims to address.

Johan Leman (1998) linked religion and ethnicity by arguing that in the case of “migration linked ethnicities” it was common for immigrants to develop networks that connected their lives in the host society with the one they had in their home countries. These networks often produced associations with some organizational structure, thus, making religion a key variable in this kind of group formation. Leman wrote

Religion can also form a basis for creating networks. One of the first frameworks imported from the home country that hones in on the community life of the immigrants is established by providers of religious services. Along with the immigrants from traditionally Catholic countries like Italy and Spain came many priests and nuns who organized worship in the immigrants’ own language and saw to the important religious ceremonies, once again in the language and according to the cultural traditions of their congregation. (23)

In the case of Latinos/Hispanics, until very recently, the practice of the North American Catholic Church has been not to import Latin American clergy. In both Catholic and Protestant churches, however, services have been carried out in Spanish and immigrants have been allowed to replicate traditions transplanted from their countries of origin. For this reason, Peggy Levitt notes, “religion plays a critical role in identity construction, meaning making and value formation. Migrants also use religion to create alternative allegiances and places of belonging” (2003: 851). In so doing, churches, more than other institutions, have created a setting in which language and cultural traditions can be maintained and utilized to construct and reconstruct ethnic identities.

In addition to providing a context in which cultural retention could occur, churches also created a space where different national origin groups could come into close interaction with one another. By having services in Spanish and allowing the Spanish language to be spoken freely in church, religion provided a space not only for cultural retention, but also for identity construction. Anthony Stevens-Arroyo wrote

It is possible to see the persistence of the Spanish language as a badge of social identity. As long as a person can speak Spanish, he or she is usually considered by peers to have preserved a Latino cultural heritage. It is through the Spanish language that religion provided an identity for Latinos and Latinas and helped them form communities in urban centers during the post World War II migrations. The church was where Spanish was employed to talk about life's most important duties; where an elevated diction was enjoyed; where congregants sang traditional hymns in the tongue of the motherland. (1998: 169)

Churches provided a public setting for language and practices that previously were limited to the private sphere of the home. Thus, churches not only maintained the Spanish language among immigrants, but also became a place where language and cultural traditions could be passed on to second-generation children.

In their important study on immigrant religious congregations in Houston, Helen Rose Ebaugh and Janet Saltzman Chafetz reach a very similar conclusion about the role of religion in immigrants' lives. Examining a cross-section of congregations that included large and small, institutionalized and informal, and a variety of religious belief systems, the authors argue the migration experiences and its accompanying sense of alienation often times produces a heightened religiosity among immigrants. Furthermore, "immigrant religious institutions provide the physical and social spaces in which those who share the same traditions, customs and languages can reproduce many aspects of their native cultures for themselves and attempt to pass them on to their children" (385). It is in reproducing existing practices and creating new ones that churches have become central to the process of identity formation.

While Ebaugh and Chafetz clearly recognize the role that congregations play in cultural retention, they also remind the readers that some churches have responded to the challenge of responding to diverse populations by embracing cultural reproduction.

When faced with many distinct identities and practices, some churches have resorted to



fostering broad based identifications, which are expressions of shared religious beliefs and the numerous representations of faith that immigrants bring with them (403). The Hispanic Day celebrations in both Protestant and Catholic congregations in Paterson follow this same model. While the Catholic faith, in particular, already views itself as a universal faith, the leadership consciously promoted the expression of national, cultural or ethnic practices jointly to encourage the members of the congregation to learn about each other in an atmosphere of mutual respect and appreciation.

Finally, this project is also concerned with the role that religious institutions have as a potential source of civic skills for immigrants or racial and ethnic minorities. Sydney Verba noted that

Those who are involved at work, in church or in organizations are likely to be exposed to political messages and discussion that can stimulate political activity. Furthermore, these secondary institutions become the locus for attempts at political mobilization; not only do those who lead them make explicit attempts to get people involved in politics but at work, in church and voluntary associations people develop interpersonal networks that serve to bring them into politics. It is, we believe, largely through the creation of these resources that the major non-political institutions of society influence the political involvement of citizens. (1993: 3)

Verba concluded that Latinos/Hispanics were the most disadvantaged group when it came to political participation. They often lacked English proficiency, had lower indices of education and belonged to Catholic churches, which according to the survey were less participatory than their Protestant counterparts. However, in Latin America, two faces of the Catholic Church have been documented. One face is that of the traditionally hierarchical, conservative Church and the other is of a socially and theologically progressive Church whose focus was social justice for the poor (Berryman, 1994 and Levine, 1986, Mainwaring and Wilde, 1989). It is important to examine whether either

of these two faces is being replicated in predominantly Latino/Hispanic Catholic churches in the United States or whether a different pattern is being created.

For the purposes of this study, if the hierarchical model of the Catholic Church is still the norm, then priests can be directly involved in shaping identities, particularly if they take a proactive role in promoting pan-ethnicity. Given that identities are formed in relation to how individuals see themselves and how others view them, it is more likely for a North American priest to promote pan-ethnicity, since he, like the larger Anglo society, is more likely to view individuals of Latin American origin as Latinos/Hispanics. Latin American or Latino/Hispanic priests would be more likely to distinguish on the basis of national origin. This hypothesis is supported by my own previous research (Baía, 1999).

Challenging the model of the traditional church, research has begun to show that Latino Catholics may be different from other Catholic groups because they “do not look first to the church or other institutions, but to themselves and to the family and local community” (Deck, 1994: 15). It is possible that a growing Latino/Hispanic laity is more important to the community than the hierarchical church leadership. This pattern would follow more closely the model of Protestant churches, which have been characterized as more participatory than their Catholic counterparts.

Even with the apparent significance of religious institutions in shaping Latino/Hispanic identity, little scholarly work has been produced examining this subject (Cadena, 1995: 34). It is partly the aim of this study to fill that gap. Whether it is the role of the religious leadership, active religious involvement or a combination of both, we can expect that churches and church leaders are playing a significant role in the emergence of Latino/Hispanic identity.

### Conclusion

The recognition that Latino/Hispanic identity may be one among other layered identities is a giant step forward for the literature. However, with the exception of Jones-Correa and Oboler's studies, much of the recent literature directly addressing Latino/Hispanic identity is based on anecdotal evidence. Since marketing firms and the media may have now made the debates over the existence of a pan-ethnic identity fruitless, the challenge now is for research to find empirical evidence of how this identity is emerging at the community level? Such studies can help us decipher whether Latino/Hispanic identity is more likely to surface in specific contexts or whether it is a national trend? In addition, we must ask how identities (national, gender, pan-ethnic, etc.) are negotiated? Finally, we need to more carefully investigate the meanings attached to Latino/Hispanic identity? These are some of the questions that the findings of this study aim to address. However, they will only represent a small contribution to a large subject that awaits more study.

This chapter has reviewed the literature relevant to the subject of Latino/Hispanic identity. The following chapter briefly places the case studies chosen for this project into the context of the city of Paterson, NJ. Chapter 3 examines the history of Paterson, with special emphasis on its waves of immigration and the post-WWII rise in its Latino/Hispanic community.

## CHAPTER 3 HISTORY OF LATIN AMERICAN MIGRATION TO PATERSON

### **Introduction**

This chapter provides a background of the city of Paterson with particular emphasis on the Latin American groups that now form the majority of the city's population. Information on Paterson's Latino/Hispanic community is virtually non-existent. Thus, this chapter has been pieced together using materials documenting immigrants' experiences in New York, local newspapers and my interviews and observations. The chapter will begin with a brief history of Paterson, following with a discussion of the various national origin groups that comprise the Latino/Hispanic community. The chapter ends with a short analysis of Latino/Hispanic politics in the city.

Paterson, located 11 miles from Manhattan, is the third largest city in New Jersey, behind Newark and Jersey City. Paterson is the seat of Passaic County, whose population was estimated at 489,049, of which 30% were of Latino/Hispanic origin. In the year 2000, Latinos/Hispanics in Paterson numbered 74,774 or 50.1% of its 149,222 total population (Census 2000). New Jersey's third largest city was founded in 1791 primarily because of the importance of the Passaic River and its falls for the development of industry in the region. Paterson quickly became a manufacturing center for textile mills, locomotive engines and weapons, like the Colt revolver. By mid 1800s, silk mills were established in the city and it was this industry that brought Paterson its greatest wealth, making it known as the "Silk City." During the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>

centuries, the silk boom brought wealth and stature to the city, characteristics that are still evident today in its magnificent, yet decaying, architecture.

Paterson's birth as an industrial center contributed to its establishment as an immigrant city. Dutch and German settlers acquired tracts of land for farming in the area in the 1680s. When iron was discovered in this region, Germans were recruited to work the mines. However, it wasn't until the 1880s, the period of the first "Great Wave" of immigration to the United States, that immigrants began pouring into the city. The Paterson and Hudson River Railroad, the city's proximity to New York and the booming manufacturing industries lured immigrants in search of work.

This boom in wealth and population coincided with the establishment of the churches that form part of this study. The Cathedral of St. John the Baptist and Our Lady of Lourdes were both constructed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century responding to the needs of the incoming immigrants. The original building housing the Church of the Good Shepard (El Buen Pastor) was built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. All of these churches, like the city of Paterson, have witnessed the passage of numerous immigrant groups, first the Germans and Dutch, then, the Italians and Irish. The early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century also saw the entry of large numbers of African Americans, as part of the "Great Migration," who were also lured to Paterson's many industries. Unfortunately, the Great Depression hit industrial centers, like Paterson, very hard, thus ending the city's "golden age."

The Second World War renewed Paterson's economy. Paterson's history as a weapon's manufacturing center enabled the city to insert itself as a major producer of both arms and machinery. Regrettably, the wartime growth was short-lived. By the 1950s, it was clear that the city's economy was in a major downturn. Some

manufacturing firms left the city, while others left the state. This economic slump was most evident in the decay of the city's architecture and infrastructure. Paterson's European-American residents began fleeing the city for the suburbs, which only exasperated the decomposition of the city as property values and tax revenue dropped drastically. However, as these residents left, the city once again became the focal point of a new immigrant flow.

### **Latino/Hispanic Migration to Paterson-Puerto Ricans**

Information on Latino/Hispanic migration to Paterson is extremely scarce. While good records exist about the region's early European immigrants, data on more recent immigration flows is not readily available. For this reason, as well as the fact that most Latino/Hispanic immigrants in Paterson first arrived in New York City, this discussion will rely heavily on published materials on Latino/Hispanic migration to New York City. In addition, newspaper articles will be used in the discussion of the most recent developments in the community.

The 2000 Census reports that today, persons of Latino/Hispanic origin account for 50.1% of Paterson's population. Three national origin groups represent the majority of that group, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans and Peruvians. Puerto Ricans make up the largest and oldest Latino/Hispanic group in Paterson. The 1990 Census reported Puerto Ricans comprised 46.2% Latinos/Hispanics in the city however, by the year 2000, their numbers had declined to 32.1%. This result is not surprising as many Puerto Ricans during the 1980s and 1990s left the large urban centers of the northeastern part of the US as other Latin American national origin groups moved in to replace them. Yet, even with decline numbers, Puerto Ricans still retain numerical dominance and the political and economic

influence that results from that dominance, which will be discussed in more detail further on.

Although there were Puerto Ricans in Paterson prior to World War II, their numbers were small. Even in New York City (historically the US city with the largest concentration of Puerto Ricans), pre-World War II Puerto Rican immigration was rather limited. There is discrepancy in the data available estimating the size of the population. However, records of entry and exit indicate that between 1900 and 1945, an average of 2,111 persons of Puerto Rican birth immigrated and remained in the US yearly (Díaz-Stevens, 1993). Using this figure, one could estimate that, by 1945, there were almost 95,000 persons of Puerto Rican birth in the US.

One of the problems with the above-mentioned figure is that to that number must be added the US-born children of Puerto Rican parents and those individuals that entered the US prior to 1900. In addition, the figure does not take into account individuals who migrated to New York City but later moved to other locations, like Newark or Paterson. Therefore, it is not surprising that estimates of the Puerto Rican population in New York City range from a high of 200,000 in 1926 (Pérez y González, 34) to a low of 70,000 in 1940 (Glazer and Moynihan, 93). Although there is debate with respect to the population estimates, there is consensus that the large-scale migration began in 1946. Between the years of 1946 and 1964, on average 34,165 Puerto Rican immigrated to the US, a flow that transformed the landscape of the northeastern coast of the United States (Pérez y González, 35).

Three factors contributed to the mass migration of Puerto Ricans to the US. First, growing population and unemployment rates forced many Puerto Ricans to seek work

outside of the island. In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when Puerto Rico became a territory of the US, investments in the island's sugar industry displaced large segments of small subsistence farmers, who found no alternative but to migrate to the cities in search of work. The United States' industrialization program, Operation Bootstrap, successfully attracted industry to the island, but these firms were largely capital intensive. Operation Bootstrap did nothing to counteract Puerto Rico's growing unemployment crisis. During this period, the island was becoming more and more urban, but cities provided scarce employment possibilities. Added to this scenario was a population explosion which left many Puerto Ricans with no alternative but to seek work elsewhere (Portes and Rumbaut, 227).

Second, transportation improvements during this period greatly facilitated Puerto Rican migration. Prior to 1946, a boat trip from San Juan to New York took a few days. However, in 1946 air service was established between the two cities. The availability of flights between Puerto Rico and New York City resulted in 13,500 Puerto Ricans migrating in the year 1945 and as mentioned above, that number rose to almost 40,000 the following year (Glazer and Moynihan, 93 and González y Pérez, 35). Thus, air travel provided an easy means for those Puerto Ricans who needed to migrate and established a simple and steady link between the island and the US.

Finally, labor recruiters also contributed to the migration flow. Although cities like Paterson were no longer at their economic peak, manufacturing in plastics, machines, textiles, etc still required cheap labor. Puerto Ricans and later other Latino/Hispanic groups served as that cheap labor force that maintained these firms afloat. Once air travel became accessible, recruiters for these firms actively sought potential workers in Puerto



Rico, even at time covering their transportation costs to New York. It is important to mention that for US recruiters, Puerto Ricans were a logical choice since their US citizenship made them easily employable in the US (Portes and Rumbaut, 227).

These numbers represent Puerto Rican migration to New York City. However, by the 1950s, New York City was becoming an entry point and cities across the Northeast, such as Newark, became places of settlement. In the 1960s and '70s, Cubans and Puerto Ricans were the largest Latino/Hispanic groups in New Jersey, yet their experiences were quite different. We will first discuss the Puerto Rican experience.

In the 1960s and '70s, for Puerto Ricans trying to avoid the poverty and crime associated with cities like New York and Newark, Paterson wasn't just a place where factory employment was available, but also it was considered to be a quieter, safer place to live. Maria, a long time resident arrived in Paterson, in 1970. Commenting about how she arrived in Paterson, she states, "I arrived in New York, but I had a sister here, so I came to Paterson. I liked Paterson much better than New York. Paterson was very different then, it was cleaner and it was beautiful" (Personal Interview, 2000). The 1970 Census estimated that there were 11,923 Puerto Ricans in the city of Paterson. However, the Paterson Planning Board Housing Survey counted 18,000 Puerto Ricans in the city for the same year. Whatever the actual population, by 1972, the Puerto Rican community was visible and important enough to warrant printing campaign materials for local elections in Spanish.

Similarly to their New York counterparts, Puerto Ricans worked in low-paying factory jobs. The individuals who arrived in the US during the period of 1946 – 1964 were younger, less educated and less skilled than the migrants of previous years (Pérez y

González, 36). In addition, the language barrier and a low rate of high school attainment were important determinants of Puerto Rican's employment possibilities. A Puerto Rican merchant community quickly emerged in Paterson. However, a Peruvian newspaper reporter, Victor Manuel Tirado, writes that the Chamber of Commerce was not able to fully account for these entrepreneurs as most did not want to register or become members (1972). This example defines Puerto Rican participation at this time as most remained outside of New Jersey's social and political structures (Cunningham, 371).

By the late 1970s, it was estimated that Latinos/Hispanics comprised 25% of Paterson's population. Puerto Ricans, by far, were the largest and the most established national group, and yet none had ever held any important public office (Bondy, 1978). This lack of representation was the impetus for the candidacy of several Puerto Ricans for local posts. In the 1960s, Rita Avalo was the first Latino/Hispanic to be elected Alderman, but the position was largely ceremonial. There were several unsuccessful candidacies in the 1970s, but Puerto Ricans visibility in Paterson's landscape did not translate into political representation until the 1980s. Prior to that time, members of the community made an entry into the public sector through non-elected positions. For example, Gilbert Collazo served as assistant to the mayor in the 1970s and the police department became one of the first public sector employers of Puerto Ricans.

In 1984, after years lacking political representation, Maria Magda was elected the first Latino/Hispanic member of a city council in the state of New Jersey. In 1988, she broke another barrier by becoming the first Latino/Hispanic President of Paterson's City Council. Along with these important accomplishments, one of the most memorable moments of Latino/Hispanic politics in Paterson came in 1992. In that year, four Puerto

Ricans won a place in Paterson's City Council, making a dramatic mark on Paterson's political scene. Since then, Puerto Ricans have continued gaining political ground in the city. Anna DeMolli was elected as assistant superintendent of schools and in 1997 Edwin Duroy became the first Latino/Hispanic superintendent of schools in the city. In addition, that same year, Paterson sent its first Hispanic, Nellie Pou, to the state assembly. In 1998, yet another woman of Puerto Rican and Peruvian backgrounds, Yolanda Adrianzen, made history by coming the first Hispanic/Latina in the state to hold the post of corporation counsel (Burke, 2000). Finally, and perhaps the group's greatest political accomplishment in Paterson was the election of Jose "Joey" Torres as the city's first Latino/Hispanic mayor in 2002.

Clearly Puerto Ricans have been at the forefront of political participation among Latinos/Hispanics in the city of Paterson. In addition, they have been able to begin opening doors of representation for Latinos/Hispanics of other nationalities in the city. However, what these accomplishments mean for Latino/Hispanic political power in city politics is still unclear. Commenting on several Latino/Hispanic electoral wins in the year 2000, *Herald News* reporter Hilary Burke noted that

Although Puerto Ricans have made strides in the public sector for decades, their progress has proceeded inch by inch. Many recent appointments and electoral victories still represent firsts for the Puerto Rican community and often, for the Hispanic community overall. (2000)

The fact that these are "firsts" for the Latino/Hispanic community, raises the question, why has it taken so long for Latinos/Hispanics to obtain political representation? First, like many other Latinos/Hispanics across the country, Latinos/Hispanics, until recently, have not been politically active. Second, in the city of Paterson, they compete with a strong and organized African American community for political space. Third and

perhaps most important, Latinos/Hispanics have historically been divided along national lines and have failed to form the united front necessary to put candidates in office. Therefore, although today, Latinos/Hispanics are the city's majority, only until very recently, these factors had resulted in City Hall and its resources being under the control of the African American population.

### **Cubans**

Cubans first arrived in New Jersey in significant numbers in the early 1960s. The Cuban Revolution of 1959 and the establishment of a Marxist/Communist regime under Fidel Castro resulted in the departure of thousands of individuals, most settled in Miami, FL, while smaller communities grew in New York and New Jersey. Due to the US' adversarial relationship with the Castro regime, Cuban exiles entered the US as political refugees (as they continue to today). Their special status translated into government programs that provided educational training, employment help, medical care and cash payments. In addition, Cuban refugees were allowed to apply for US residency and, thus, citizenship without having to follow the procedures established for other immigrant groups (Daniels, 376).

Cubans arriving in New Jersey settled largely in Newark, Jersey City or Union City. However, a small community settled in Paterson, beginning in the 1960s. While, today they only make up approximately 1.1% of the Latino/Hispanic population of the city, community leaders estimated that in 1972, there were approximately 3,000 Cubans living in Paterson (Tirado, 1972) and over 70,000 in the state (Cunningham, 145). As part of the refugee assistance program mentioned above, many initially worked in factories as low-skill laborers. However, others quickly became entrepreneurial immigrants (Portes and Rumbaut, 20-21, and Daniels, 374-375). Following the pattern

established in Miami, small Cuban-owned businesses began serving the Latino/Hispanic community (Tirado, 1972). This entrepreneurial group did not establish itself in Paterson in the way that is now characteristic of the Cuban enclave in Union City. However, for a small group it represented an accelerated means for upward social and economic mobility.

Cubans are predominantly Catholic. Along with Puerto Ricans, they were the pioneers of the Latino/Hispanic community in Paterson's Catholic churches. In 1960s, Paterson's Catholic churches were serving a largely Italian-American and Irish-American population. However, by the end of the 1960s, churches like of Our Lady of Lourdes and the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist began to recognize that their parishioners of European descent were leaving the city and it was Latin American immigrants, primarily Cubans and Puerto Ricans who were filling the pews. Soon Spanish-speaking clergy were asked to join many of Paterson's Catholic churches and Spanish masses were introduced. Although today Cubans and Puerto Ricans no longer make up the majority of active Catholics in the city, they were at the forefront of pressuring Paterson's Catholic Church to respond to the changing demographics of the city. (Personal interview with Pastor Giordani and Our Lady of Lourdes' church documents).

Cuban Protestants were also some of the founders of the Iglesia Cristiana Reformada El Buen Pastor. Although a much smaller percentage of the Cuban population in the city, a group of Cubans were among the first Latinos/Hispanics to transform the Christian Reformed Church of the Good Shepard into La Iglesia Cristiana Reformada El Buen Pastor. Recognizing that Latinos/Hispanics were an ever-growing population in the city in the 1960s, leaders in the Christian Reformed Church decided to

hire a Cuban pastor to serve a growing Cuban population. After his years in service, a second Cuban pastor took over the church and began recruiting Latinos/Hispanics of other nationalities, beginning the process that resulted in what the church's current pastor calls a "multi-Hispanic church" (Personal interview with Pastor Orellana, 2000).

As Latin American immigrants from other nationalities began arriving in Paterson and as Cubans continued to improve their socio-economic conditions, their numbers in Paterson began to decline. In both Catholic and Protestant churches they were replaced by Dominicans, Peruvians and Colombians. While some moved away from New Jersey, mainly to south Florida, others simply chose to settle in areas with a large and familiar Cuban populations. This concentration of Cubans in cities like Union City created a strong united community that enabled Robert Menéndez, the son Cuban refugees, to become the first and only Hispanic to represent New Jersey in the House of Representatives.

### **Dominicans**

By the 1970s, small communities of Latin American immigrants from countries other than Puerto Rico and Cuba began arriving in Paterson. Dominicans, Peruvians, Colombians and other Latin American immigrants were choosing Paterson as their home. Most of these immigrants were drawn by potential employment opportunities, but also by the Latino/Hispanic presence that Puerto Ricans and Cubans established in the city. Small numbers of Dominicans arrived in the city in the 1970s, but the flow greatly intensified in the 1980s. By the year 2000, it was estimated that Dominicans made up 20.5 % of the Latino/Hispanic population in the city, making Dominicans the only national origin group challenging the numerical dominance of Puerto Ricans.

Most Dominicans migrating to the US settled in New York City and they have been the subjects of a large body of scholarly work (Robert Pastor, 1994, Jorge Duany, 1994, Patricia Pessar and Sherri Grasmuck, 1991, Alejandro Portes and Luis Guarnizo, 1991, Eugenia Georges, 1990, David Bray, 1987, Robert Bach, 1983, Sherri Grasmuck, 1983, 1982, and Frank de Canelo, 1982. In contrast, the Dominican community of Paterson has been largely ignored. Thus, in order to undertake a discussion of the Dominican community in the city, it is necessary to borrow from the work documenting the New York experience.

Dominican migration to the US was very limited prior to the 1960s. Under the rule of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo, travel was strictly controlled. Only privileged Dominicans who could afford the costs of travel and public officials were allowed the luxury of travel abroad. The well to do and exiled political dissidents were the pioneers of Dominican communities in the US, primarily in New York City. Records indicate that during the period of 1930-1961 over 19,000 permanent resident visas were granted to Dominicans. However, in 1963, 10,683 Dominicans were legally admitted as residents in US, a figure that surpasses the number for the decade between 1951 and 1960 (*Immigration and Naturalization Service Statistical Yearbook*, 1993). It was the collapse of the 31-year dictatorship that opened the door for mass migration. The political and economic uncertainty of the period following Trujillo's assassination fueled a dramatic increase in out-migration to New York and Puerto Rico. This trend intensified in the 1970s and continued throughout the 1980s and the 1990s.

During the 1970s, the Dominican government embarked in a program of import substitution industrialization. In an attempt to foster manufacturing in the country, the

government provided incentives for firms that would create employment of the working and middle classes (Portes and Guarnizo, 45). Added to the state's focus on industrialization, were the effects of the commercialization of agriculture, which effectively displaced many small farmers who were no longer able to compete with large farms (Bray, 157). While the employment in manufacturing increased, it did not keep pace with the large numbers of individuals who were moving to the cities due the displacement occurring in rural areas. The result was that by 1980 unemployment figures surpassed 20% and underemployment was estimated at 30% (*Business International Economist*, 8).

The Dominicans who migrated during this period were primarily from rural backgrounds. Following the pattern outlined by Patricia Pessar and Sherri Grasmuck in *Between Two Islands* (1991), this earlier group of Dominicans in Paterson originated from the agriculturally rich region of El Cibao, by way of Santiago (the second largest city in the country) or Santo Domingo (the capital of the Dominican Republic). In general, these migrants were less skilled and were part of the lower or working classes. What they shared in common with other later migrants was their motivation, economic need (67).

Out-migration quickly became an escape valve for the Dominican government. The government was aware that even a growing economy would not be able to produce enough employment for the hundreds of Dominicans migrating to the cities on a daily basis. In addition, it soon became evident that Dominicans abroad were a source of much needed foreign exchange. Thus, while the Dominican government did not encourage out-migration, it did not actively discourage it either, particularly illegal migration. Only



recently, has the government actively promoted a campaign aimed at dissuading individuals from taking the treacherous boat rides to Puerto Rico, in which so many have perished.

While the Dominican government recognized the value of the escape valve, so did the US government. It too realized that out-migration provided a means to avoid potential instability routed in social and economic disparities. The result of this realization was that as the demand for immigrant visas increased, so did the supply. In 1974, 15,680 Dominicans immigrants were admitted into the US. Ten years later, that number grew to 23,147 and by 1994 over 50,000 Dominicans were allowed to enter as legal permanent residents (*INS Statistical Yearbook 1993*). Relative to the population of the country (approximately 8,000,000 today), the US granted a significant number of immigrant visas. It is not a coincidence that the Dominican Republic (a rather small country) has been one of the largest contributors of immigrants in the past decades. Dominican migration to the US has been a direct result of Cold War politics in the Caribbean region and the US decision to avoid further destabilization (Mitchell, 1992 and Ruiz, 1996).

Even as the numbers of immigrant visas granted increased, since the 1970s, Dominicans who do not meet the qualifications for legal permanent visas have found mechanisms to by-pass the legal channels for migration. The three most common means for Dominicans to illegally enter the US are: overstaying tourist visas, an illegal and treacherous boat passage to Puerto Rico and purchasing falsified documents. It is impossible to calculate how many Dominicans have migrated illegally, but what is most important about this issue for the purposes of this discussion is that there is a significant

component of the Dominican population in the US who is or at one time has been illegal. Furthermore, that status of illegality has shaped the experience of Dominicans in the US in a way that differentiates them from the Puerto Rican and Cuban groups discussed above.

By the 1980s, the Dominican middle-class was feeling the negative impact of stringent fiscal policies imposed on the government by the International Monetary Fund. These measures dramatically cut private and public sector employment, which had been the bastions of the middle class. Professionals, small entrepreneurs and others began realizing that their purchasing power was shrinking. In addition, the job opportunities that once had been available to professionals were no longer guaranteed. These circumstances intensified a migratory flow that now included an educated middle class in search of better living standards (García, 2000).

Like the case of Puerto Ricans and Cubans (early on) many Dominicans in Paterson work in factories. Again, there are no reliable figures, but my own research supports this conclusion. However, in Paterson, Dominicans distinguish themselves from Puerto Ricans and other Latino/Hispanic national groups because of their entrepreneurial presence. A substantial number of Dominicans now own their own businesses; these include bodegas (grocery stores), beauty salons, and travel and remittance agencies. Daniel Jara, President of the Statewide Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey estimates that approximately 50% of bodegas in Paterson are owned and operated by Dominicans (García, 2000). This element of small business ownership has translated into employment opportunities for other Dominicans, in particular for younger, more recent

arrivals. In addition, small business ownership has provided a training ground for leaders in the community.

Estimating the size of Paterson's Dominican population is difficult. In 1990, it was reported 720,344 persons of Hispanic origin in the state, of which 52,807 were Dominican. In Paterson, for the same year, 15.3% (8,750) of the total 57,050 Latinos/Hispanics were Dominicans (US Census). Mr. Jara's estimates that there are 200,000 Dominicans in the state and 40% of those reside in Passaic County. Census 2000 reported that 15,331 Dominicans resided in the city of Paterson. While Mr. Jara's estimate is probably inflated, it is also likely that the 15,000 Dominicans counted by the most recent census is under-estimation as many of these individual's illegal status resulted in under representation. Irrespective of the discrepancy over the size of the population, it is well known that Dominicans are a sizeable and visible group in Paterson. Unfortunately, they have not achieved political representation. Since the 1990s various Dominicans, primarily entrepreneurs, have begun seeking public office. At least one Dominican, Juan Jimenez served on the Board of Education and last year, Virtudes Sánchez ran, but lost her bid for a city council seat. Thus, while Dominicans may have clout in Paterson's entrepreneurial community, it has not translated into political power.

One reason often given for the inability of the Dominican community to put candidates into public office is what Michael Jones-Correa terms the "myth of return" (91). Like many other immigrants from Latin American, when Dominicans make the decision to migrate it is seen as a temporary measure. Dominicans often see themselves as sojourners and not as permanent immigrants. Thus, most expect to leave the country, work to save a substantial amount of money and then return to enjoy the fruits of their

hard labor. This idea of return focuses their attention on the country of origin and not on permanent settlement in the receiving country. Discussing the “myth of return” Miguel Díaz, vice-Chairman of the Passaic County Planning Board, states,

We’ve dedicated too much attention to political there [Dominican Republic] while forgetting about where we live ... we live here, pay taxes here and send our children to these schools. If we don’t realize that, we’re not going to be able to empower ourselves (García, 2000).

The focus on the country of origin is demonstrated in the numbers of individuals in both New York and New Jersey that travel to the Dominican Republic to vote during presidential elections (Jones-Correa, 103). However, as Díaz notes concentrating on the politics of the home country diverts attention from the issues that affect the community locally and thus has deterred Dominicans from achieving political voice.

### **Peruvians**

Unlike the previous cases, Peruvians in Paterson have been the subjects of scholarly research. Therefore, more information is available on this group, particularly regarding the earliest migrants. Peruvian migration to Paterson is intimately tied to Paterson’s long history as a textile center. During the first half of the twentieth century, one of Paterson’s textile plants opened a subsidiary in Lima, Perú. This commercial link between Paterson and Lima brought the first Peruvian immigrants to the city during the 1920s. Teófilo Altamirano, a scholar of Peruvian migration, estimated that between the decades of the 1930 - 1950 approximately, 100 Peruvian families resided in Paterson. These initial migrants were skilled textile workers brought to Paterson because of their knowledge of Incan patterns used on Peruvian-made wools. The prosperity of these Peruvians served as an incentive for other migrants, but substantial numbers did not migrate until the late 1950s and early 1960s (Altamirano, 1990, 3-4).

The flow that began in the 1950s had New York and Chicago as its primary destinations. The Peruvians that migrated during this time included individuals with substantial resource necessary to meet the costs of travel (1992, 133). Although a significant number of these individuals were members of Peru's upper classes, those individuals that chose Paterson as their residence during this period were primarily urban and members of the middle or lower-middle classes (1990, 4). Since most immigrants migrate and choose their destination based on contacts (family, friends, etc), this suggests that it is likely that Peruvians in Paterson received help to cover travel costs and perhaps had ties to Peruvians of the upper class. Similarly to other cases discussed above, the entry point for most of the middle and lower-middle class Peruvian migrants was New York. However, Paterson's employment opportunities made the city the place of settlement.

Beginning in the 1970s, the migration flow intensified and its composition changed to include members of Perú's lowest socio-economic stratum. This group constitutes the largest proportion of Paterson's Peruvian population. Peruvians migrating during this period, particularly in the 1980s, were less educated and originated from Lima's urban popular sectors. An important characteristic of this group is their, at least initial, illegal status (Altamirano, 1992: 134). Similarly to the case of many Dominicans, the demand for immigrant visas out-paced the supply and Peruvians began finding ways to circumvent legal migration. Geographical constraints limited Peruvian illegal migration. Thus, most Peruvians in Paterson who arrived illegally did so by overstaying a tourist visa. However, some Peruvians traveled to Mexico and crossed the US Mexico border illegally (Personal Interview, 1996).

The 1990 Census counted 5,473 persons of Peruvian origin in the city. Census 2000 estimated the number of Peruvians at 7,038. As in the case of Dominicans, this figure appears low to anyone who has visited Paterson. In 1990, Altamirano estimated that the Peruvian population, including second-generation children, numbered 30,000 (1990, 6). A majority of Peruvians can still be found working in factories (many still in textile dying plants) and the service sector, although there are growing numbers of professionals and entrepreneurs (Altamirano, 6). The concentration of Peruvians in this area enabled a substantial degree of social organization, of which the centerpieces have been religious brotherhoods and social clubs.

Paterson's Peruvian population brought with it a strong popular religious devotion to *El Señor de los Milagros*,<sup>2</sup> which became the center of social and religious organization of the Peruvian community. Masses in honor of *El Señor de los Milagros* began as early as 1965, but it wasn't until 1976, that the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes, home of the first *Hermanidad del Señor de los Milagros*, held the first of its annual processions in Paterson (Altamirano, 7). Today, there are numerous brotherhoods and processions throughout the Tri-state area and in cities like Toronto, Washington D.C., Atlanta and Miami. These *hermandades* have become major vehicles for maintaining Peruvian culture and religiosity in the United States (Baía, 1999).

Peruvians have been rather absent from Paterson's local political scene when compared to Puerto Ricans and Dominicans. Although, a high level of social

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<sup>2</sup>*El Señor de los Milagros* is a portrait of Christ dating back to Perú's colonial period, painted by an African slave who belonged to one of Lima's religious brotherhoods (or *hermandades*). After a devastating earthquake, the image, still intact, became a national symbol of the reconstruction of the city and the miraculous power of Christ. The devotees' most visible and largest expression of faith is the annual procession in Lima on October 18, which lasts three days and in which hundreds of *hermandades* participate.

organization characterizes the community, these associations have largely remained outside of Paterson city politics. The moment of greatest visibility for Peruvians in the city is the annual Peruvian Parade.<sup>3</sup> Many Peruvian organizations, from soccer teams to *hermandades* participate in the weeklong activities, which culminate with the parade.

Although Peruvians in these professional, social and religious organizations have been very active with similar groups in the tri-state area and in other states around the nation, they have yet to become a launching pad for Peruvian candidates running for public offices in the city of Paterson. Daniel Jara stands out as the exception to this pattern, becoming one of the most prominent members of not just the Peruvian community, but also of the Latino/Hispanic community in the state of New Jersey. He is an entrepreneur, who as mentioned above, currently heads the Statewide Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey and has served on numerous boards, including the Governor's Advisory Council on Minority Business Development. As a state-level leader, Jara has accomplished what Paterson's Latino/Hispanic leaders have not, transcending the boundaries of national origin and becoming a voice for the Latino/Hispanic business community in New Jersey.

### **Other Latin American immigrants**

Beginning in the 1980s and throughout the 1990s, Latin American national origin groups, other than Puerto Ricans, Dominicans and Peruvians, began arriving in Paterson, benefiting from and building upon the existing Latino/Hispanic community. Most prominent among these newer groups are Colombians, Mexicans and Costa Ricans. Of these groups, Colombians have the longest period of residence in Paterson.

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<sup>3</sup>Like Peruvians, Dominicans and Puerto Ricans also organize an annual parade. These parades are the centerpieces of citywide activities in Paterson. Although Latinos/Hispanics of all nationalities enjoy the parades, all groups compete with each other for the most spectacular parade.

The 2000 Census reported that Colombians comprised 6.8% of the Latino/Hispanic population, making them the fourth largest group, behind Peruvians. Colombians like Dominicans and Peruvians own small ethnic based businesses, such as restaurants and travel agencies. Many also work in factories or provide cleaning services. However, since the late 1990s, the escalation of violence in Colombia's has driven professionals to migrate. While the majority of these Colombians have migrated to south Florida, northeastern cities like Paterson have also seen an increase in its Colombian population (Burke, 2000). Even with a growing community, Colombians in Paterson have yet to become an active and visible minority. In comparison to the other larger groups, Colombians have formed associations, but they are primarily social clubs or small social service organizations.

According to Census 2000, 32.1% of the Hispanic/Latino population in Paterson is Puerto Rican, 1.1% is Cuban, 6.7% is Mexican and 60% of Paterson's Latino/Hispanic community is "Other Hispanic or Latino." Of that 60%, 20.5% are Dominicans. There are a few important points about these figures. First, extrapolating from the numbers above, 40% of the Latino/Hispanic population of the city is comprised by a mixture of different national origin groups. Second, following the national trend, Mexicans, who in 1990 only numbered 1241, are increasing their presence in the city. Third, there is also a growing population of Latinos/Hispanics who don't necessarily neatly fit into the established categories.

One of the reasons why I chose Paterson as the site for this research was because of its diverse Latino/Hispanic population and the Census 2000 figures confirm that. Not only are there three large groups competing for economic, social and political power, but



there are also growing numbers of smaller groups also vying for space within the Latino/Hispanic community. Costa Ricans are a good example of one of these groups. The 1990 Census data for Paterson did not have a separate national category for Costa Ricans. It is likely that the numbers were so small that they did not warrant their own category. Although, Census 2000 reports that Costa Ricans make up only 1.1% of the "Other Hispanic or Latino" category, the fact that there is now a classification for Costa Ricans is significant. While during my first visit to Paterson, I remember only meeting a handful of Costa Ricans, by the year 2000, the Riverside section of the city was being transformed by Costa Ricans. In Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, for example, it is Costa Ricans that now constitute close to the majority of those attending Sunday masses.

In addition, while historically Mexicans have been largely absent from the Latino/Hispanic population of the city, today, Mexicans are ever more visible. Mexican restaurants are growing in numbers and all of the churches that were included in this research reported an increase in the presence of Mexicans in the congregations. Finally, it is important to note that as these diverse national origin groups live together, it is more likely for intermarriage to occur. Although this is still a phenomenon that is still in its infancy, the fact that Census 2000 reports that 16.3% of the "Other Hispanic or Latino" category is "not elsewhere classified" suggests that there is a growing number of persons who do not fit the established categories. It is my conjecture that there are the products of intermarriage between different national origin groups. The products of these relationships will continue to make Paterson an interesting context to analyze.

### **Dynamics of Latino/Hispanic Politics in Paterson**

Numerous factors contribute to Latinos/Hispanics inability to obtain political power in the city of Paterson. Clearly lack of education amongst the community and the US political system play a role. The low-levels of education of some immigrants and their lack of familiarity with US politics have certainly been factors in immigrants' decisions to remain outside of the local political scene. Moreover, the "myth of return" discourages Latin American immigrants from making a permanent commitment to the US and thus disqualifies them from full political participation.

Systematic harassment and intimidation also appear to be involved in the low participation rates of Latinos/Hispanics in Paterson. Passaic County has been the subject of a federal investigation of voter discrimination against Latinos/Hispanics in the county. Allegations of harassment and physical violence against voters resulted in a federal decree, which mandated a number of electoral reforms, including Spanish-language voting materials, bilingual poll workers and oversight by an appointed monitor (Burke, 2000). If systematic harassment occurred, as it appears to be the case, then this environment would only justify further lack of participation on the part of Latinos/Hispanics.

Yet, among all these variables, this division has been the determining factor in explaining the lack of political representation among Latinos/Hispanics in Paterson. The leadership of each of the largest national origin groups has at one point supported or established a political action committee (PAC). These PACS seek viable candidates in the city, but predominantly support candidates from one national origin group. Therefore, the rule in Latino/Hispanic politics in the city has been for each national origin group (Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Peruvians) to support their own candidates. Eduardo,

a Puerto Rican who has been involved in several campaigns in Paterson, notes that at the heart of this division among Latinos/Hispanics, is “a lack of trust which is the biggest challenge” for achieving political representation (Personal interview, 2000). While certain nationalities are concentrated in specific wards (districts), no one national origin group has enough of a concentration anywhere in the city to push through a candidate easily without the support of other Latinos/Hispanics. The result has been that even though Latinos/Hispanics make up over 50% of the population, it wasn’t until 2002 that Paterson elected its first Latino/Hispanic mayor. Furthermore, at least until recently, the representation that has been achieved appears to be dominated primarily by one group, Puerto Ricans.

The Puerto Rican community in Paterson has been able to take advantage of its position as founders of the Latino/Hispanic community to carve its way into city politics. Clearly the fact that the city’s first Latino/Hispanic mayor is of Puerto Rican descent is a significant achievement for the Puerto Rican community. In addition, in the year 2000, the first Latino/Hispanic appointed undersheriff for the county was Scott Ojeda, a Puerto Rican born and raised in Paterson (Burke, 2000). Eli Burgos, another Puerto Rican, became deputy mayor for the city that same year (García, 2001). Moreover, the first Latino/Hispanic elected to the County’s Board of Chosen Freeholders was also a Puerto Rican, Sonia Burgos (Cardoletti and Markey, 2000).

The dominance of Puerto Ricans in city politics has added to the existing competition among different national origin groups. Puerto Ricans clearly have advantages over other Latinos/Hispanics. They are not only the most established community, but their status as US citizens permits them to immediately get involved in

politics, even if just as registered voters. Commenting on this issue, José A. Morales, a Puerto Rican activist, notes “Some Latinos get upset because we have these political positions and we have made the gains that we have made ... but our relationship to the United States is different from theirs, we were born citizens. We have that advantage” (Burke, 2000).

Attempting to bridge the divisions amongst the different national origin groups, Daniel Jara founded La Casa Latinoamericana in the late 1980s. The organization was an umbrella organization for existing Latino/Hispanic groups in Paterson. Its purpose was to bring about some coordination among these groups often worked in isolation. According to Jara, it was so well received that it threatened some of Paterson’s established political figures and was accused of being “anti-Puerto Rican.” This tension led to disillusionment among its founders and eventually to the disintegration of the organization. Although, Jara doesn’t believe that a similar organization is necessary, he does see the need for a dialogue and consensus building among the different national origin groups. It is his opinion that leaders in Paterson have been unwilling or unable to engage in such a dialogue and that until that happens, Latinos/Hispanics will not be able to capitalize on their numbers (Personal interview, 2000).

Whether Torres’s election signals a departure from the previous pattern of politics, where national origin determined support for individual candidates remains to be seen. Historically, Puerto Ricans, as self-interested actors, have used these benefits to promote their own candidates and not broad-based Latino/Hispanic coalitions. However, it is clear that although Puerto Rican’s promoted Jose Torres as their candidate, they understood that electing him to the mayor’s office required the support of the city’s other

Latino/Hispanic groups. This is precisely why Torres' campaign enlisted the help of other Latino/Hispanic politicians, like Robert Menendez. Having Menendez' support, the most prominent Latino/Hispanic politician in the state, who is not Puerto Rican, was intended to demonstrate that Jose Torres stood for all Latinos/Hispanics in the city. The Torres campaign knew they needed a broader-based support among Latinos/Hispanics and were able to obtain it. Some may argue that Torres simply capitalized on the legal difficulties of the incumbent mayor, who at the time of the election was being investigated on numerous counts of corruption. Although it is certain that the legal problems of the incumbent helped Torres, it is important to mention that Torres ran against a field of four candidates, which included another contender of Latino/Hispanic origin. This point is key since it provides evidence that Torres' ethnic origin was not the only reason why voters selected their candidate.

Central to the discussion of the division among Latinos/Hispanics in Paterson is the issue of whether there are unifying link that would bring these different groups together. In other words, is there a Latino/Hispanic identity binding immigrants from different countries? My research findings suggest that such an identity does exist, but that it co-exists with national identities, instead of replacing them. This conclusion will be examined in chapter 4, 5 and 6, but it is important to raise it here because assuming this finding is correct, having an environment in which individuals negotiate multiple identities leaves open the opportunity for using different identities at particular times. If we apply this notion to city politics, we can identify two patterns.

First, prior to the election of Jose Torres, it appears that a pan-ethnic identity was not developed sufficiently to result in electoral cooperation among the different national

origin groups. Instead, individuals chose to emphasize their national identities in supporting their own candidates. The result was a competition amongst each other enabling a more homogenous African American population to capitalize on the Latinos/Hispanics internal divisions.

Second, the election of a Latino/Hispanic mayor suggests the possibility that the above-mentioned internal divisions have begun to subside. Given their increasing numbers and the acknowledgement that they are the fastest growing minority group nation-wide and the majority in the city of Paterson, it is possible that new alliances amongst these groups elected Jose Torres. Perhaps as Latino/Hispanic identity developed in the city, it came to be understood as an umbrella identity inclusive of national identities and that perception was central to de-emphasizing the difference among national origin groups.

Recent developments in the state of New Jersey, like the Governor's decision not to nominate a highly respected black Cuban-American lawyer to the New Jersey Supreme Court, may serve as catalysts for the state's Latino/Hispanic population to continue to build alliances on the basis of a Latino/Hispanic identity. The fact that the African American community did not support the nomination and an African American was instead nominated to the post broke any existing bonds between the state's African American and Latino/Hispanic politicians. Clara Nibot, a leader in the Bergen County's Hispanic Republican organization, states the divide, "African-Americans have drawn the line in the sand. If there was ever any doubt about their intentions to work with us and support us, there isn't a doubt any longer. This is a competition; now it's clear" (Llorente). The resulting anger on the part of many Latino/Hispanic political leaders led

to a renewed sense of loyalty and camaraderie that even transcended political parties. However, whether these feelings of Latino/Hispanic unity will continue and be the basis for long-term Latino/Hispanic cooperation both at the local and state level remains to be seen.

### **Conclusion**

Divisions among the Latino/Hispanic community in Paterson have been the norm in the city of Paterson. That pattern changed in 2002 with the election of Jose Torres to the mayor's office. The issues that have historically resulted in lack of political representation for Latinos/Hispanics are still present, lack of education, voter apathy, the "myth of return" and discrimination, among others. However, it is the division amongst the Latin American national origin groups that has been most detrimental to the emergence of Latinos/Hispanics as a political force in the city. If the election of the city's first Latino/Hispanic mayor truly constitutes the forging of a new common agenda to Latinos/Hispanics in the city, then politics in the city of Paterson could forever be transformed. Future elections will determine whether Latinos/Hispanics were able to capitalize on the momentum of the 2002 – 2003 events.

This chapter has provided a background of the history of the city of Paterson and of its Latin American origin population. The following chapter takes the discussion a step further by examining the Latino/Hispanic population utilizing the results from both this research project, as well as Census 2000 figures. In addition, Chapter 4 outlines demographic data for the three communities chosen for the study. Finally, the data examined in the chapter begins to illustrate how these communities (re)construct Latino/Hispanic identity.

## CHAPTER 4 DOCUMENTING THE EMERGENCE OF LATINO/HISPANIC IDENTITY IN PATERSON, NJ

### **Introduction**

Chapter 3 examined the history of Paterson as host city for a diverse group of Latin American groups. According to the 2000 Census, Latinos/Hispanics compose 50.1% of the city's population. This chapter examines the Latino/Hispanic population of the city using three case studies to engage the debate over the existence of a Latino/Hispanic identity. Data from the 2000 Census and from surveys and interviews conducted by the author will be used to analyze whether there is evidence of a pan-ethnic identity in Paterson and what factors contribute to the decision to identify on the basis of pan-ethnicity versus national origin.

As was discussed in Chapter 2, until recently, the academic literature on Latino/Hispanic identity has either rejected the notion a Latino/Hispanic identity exists (Giménez, 1992) or labeled it an instrumental identity used to reap rewards from the political system (Padilla, 1985). The Latino National Political Survey (LNPS), the most comprehensive study on the topic, on the surface, appears to support the notion that Latinos/Hispanics self-identify on the basis of national origin (De la Garza et al, 1992). While clearly on a much smaller scale, this study uses the LNPS as a starting point to investigate not just the existence of a pan-Latino/Hispanic identity in Paterson, but also its meaning.



Table 4-1 displays the results of surveys carried out in Paterson, New Jersey during the year 2000 among Latin American immigrants and US-born adults of Latin American heritage. Communities 1-3 refer to three distinct religious communities, (1 and 2 are Catholic; the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist and Our Lady of Lourdes, respectively and 3 is a mainstream Protestant community; the Good Shepard Christian Reformed Church) while the Comparison Group was drawn from a sample of Spanish surnamed individuals residing in the city of Paterson. Responding to some of the limitations of previous surveys, individuals were allowed to identify themselves using the terms that were provided (i.e. national origin, Latino or Hispano) or to write-in categories they felt best described their identity. The open-ended aspect of this question resulted in three major categories of self-identification, national origin, a combination of national origin and pan-ethnicity and Hispano or Latino.

Table 4-1: Self-Identification–3 Categories

| Survey Respondents       | National Origin | Self Identification                   |                   |
|--------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
|                          |                 | National Origin and Hispano or Latino | Hispano or Latino |
| Community1<br>N=64       | 21.9%           | 34.4%                                 | 43.8%             |
| Community 2<br>N=64      | 29.7%           | 17.2%                                 | 53.1%             |
| Community 3<br>N=13      | .0%             | 38.5%                                 | 61.5%             |
| Comparison Group<br>N=97 | 9.3%            | .0%                                   | 90.7%             |
| Total<br>N=238           | 17.6%           | 16.0%                                 | 66.4%             |

The results of these surveys demonstrate a pattern that does not correspond to that identified in the LNPS, as reported by De la Garza et al. Unlike LNPS, where a majority

of Puerto Ricans, Cuban-Americans and Mexican-Americans chose national origin as their preferred identity category, 66.4% of the individuals surveyed in Paterson identified themselves using a pan-ethnic term, either Latino or Hispano. Thirty-three percent of the respondents chose either national origin or a combination of national origin and a pan-ethnic term.

These results are extremely telling. While De la Garza et al found that two thirds of those surveyed preferred national identity, this study finds that the same fraction prefer some form of pan-ethnicity. The fact that Paterson is a multi-Latino/Hispanic city must be noted. In Paterson, no one Latino/Hispanic group dominates numerically, thus different national groups must compete for space, power and resources. These numbers suggest that sentiments of pan-ethnicity are present among the city's residents, which has implications, particularly for many cities undergoing rapid demographic change. Perhaps more importantly, what these data seem to suggest is that for Paterson it is difficult to deny that there is such a thing as a Latino/Hispanic identity. Although it may have been a creation of the US government, it is one that appears to have been adopted and has developed affective ties.

Examining the breakdown for the individual groups reveals even more interesting patterns. As mentioned above, Communities 1 and 2 are composed of two Catholic churches in the city of Paterson.<sup>1</sup> Comparing the results for the two Catholic communities one major unexpected pattern emerges. As mentioned above in both communities most respondents preferred to self-identify on the basis of pan-ethnicity.

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<sup>1</sup>Both Saint John the Baptist and Our Lady of Lourdes are Latino/Hispanic churches, where Spanish-speaking individuals compose over 95% of the congregation. Both have non-Latino/Hispanic pastors and have a long history in the community, having been formed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries by European immigrants.

Forty-three point eight percent and 53.1% of all respondents in Communities 1 and 2 used a pan-ethnic term. However, I was surprised to find the salience of nationality in the context of these two congregations. Twenty-one point nine percent and 29.7% respectively chose to identify on the basis of national origin only. If one adds those respondents who preferred a combined identity (nationality and pan-ethnicity) then 56.3% of the respondents for Community 1 and 46.9% for Community 2 are expressing some form of nationality. It is possible to also read these results in the opposite direction by combining the results of the combined category with those who preferred pan-ethnicity. The reason I have chosen to highlight the salience of nationality in these results is because addressing this outcome in no way threatens the existence of pan-ethnicity. The findings have already proven that in Paterson pan-ethnicity exists and is strong sentiment among the city's residents. Yet for the purposes of this study, which is concerned with understanding the mechanics of identity (re) construction, it is important to investigate why nationality is still so present in the two Catholic communities, a result that is not replicated in either the Comparison or the Protestant groups.

The Comparison Group consists of individuals who may or may not have religious affiliation.<sup>2</sup> Community 3 is composed of members of a Christian Reformed congregation. What Table 4-1 demonstrates is that members of the Comparison Group and the Protestant church are much more likely to self-identify on the basis of pan-ethnicity, than on national origin. For the Comparison Group, the data report that over 90% of the respondents preferred the terms Latino or Hispano, compared to 9.3% who selected national origin. There are methodological issues in the collection of the data for the Comparison Group that I believe affected these findings. In particular, it was not

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<sup>2</sup>Please see Table A-1 in Appendix A for religious affiliation and religious involvement tables.

possible for respondents to write-in their answers (as was necessary for those who chose a combined identity) since they received the survey over the phone.<sup>3</sup> In part for this reason, I believe that the data is not accurate and it is much likelier that approximately 50% of those surveyed chose pan-ethnicity and the remaining 50% would have been distributed between a combined identity and national origin. Even with the limitation of this data, the pattern of preference for pan-ethnicity is clearly established.

Among the Protestant congregation, 61.5% used a pan-ethnic term and 38.5% chose a combination of national origin and pan-ethnicity. The findings report that no respondents selected national origin as their preferred identification. As with the Comparison Group, I believe this result is due to methodological issues. The Protestant sample was extremely small and therefore discrepancies in the data are to be expected. However, I retained the data in the analysis because it presents an important counterpoint to the two Catholic Communities that will be revealed in the discussion of the qualitative results.

Numerous factors can affect self-identification. Thus, it is important to first examine the demographic characteristics of these groups, looking for similarities and differences that may be relevant to the above-mentioned results. Secondly, it is necessary to consider which factors are most important in determining what categories individuals use to self-identify. The following sections will undertake that examination beginning by placing these communities in socio-economic context.

### **Socio-Economic Indicators-Age**

The Latino/Hispanic population on average is younger than the larger population as a whole. Not only do Latinos/Hispanics have higher birthrates than non-

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<sup>3</sup>Please see Appendix B for a full description of the research methodologies.

Hispanic whites, but also, new immigrants tend to be working age individuals.

According to the 2000 Census figures the median age of the US population is 35.3 years (PHC-T-9). For non-Hispanic whites the median age was 38.6 years, while for persons of Latino/Hispanic origin it was 25.8 years. Table 4-2 shows the percentages in four age categories for each Community and the Comparison Group, as well as the median age for each. Although the median age is significantly higher (40 years vs. 26 years), over 60% of the respondents in Paterson were between the ages of 18 and 44.

Table 4-2: Age (in years) for Selected Latino/Hispanic communities in Paterson, NJ

|                  | Age Categories |         |         |       |        |
|------------------|----------------|---------|---------|-------|--------|
|                  | 18 – 29        | 30 – 44 | 45 – 64 | 65+   | Median |
| Community 1      | 20.0%          | 44.6%   | 27.7%   | 7.7%  | 41     |
| Community 2      | 10.4%          | 35.8%   | 37.3%   | 16.4% | 47     |
| Community3       | 0%             | 33.3%   | 41.7%   | 25.0% | 45     |
| Comparison Group | 27.4%          | 47.4%   | 20.0%   | 5.3%  | 36     |
| Total<br>N=239   | 19.2%          | 42.7%   | 28.0%   | 10.0% | 40     |

examining the figures for each group reveals that the Comparison Group is younger than its counterparts in the three religious communities. Almost 75% of the respondents in the Comparison Group are between 18-44 years, compared to 64.6%, 46.3% and 33.3%, respectively, in each of the three churches. Since the latter individuals are at the very least attending religious services, it is to be expected that the samples in the religious communities would contain older persons, given the dropout rates in church attendance among young adults.

Given the age distribution in these groups, one may wonder whether age is linked to identity construction. Generational differences are expected to affect how immigrants

self-identify. The literature on acculturation theorizes that the exposure children of immigrants and younger immigrants experience through the mass media and the educational system results in higher acculturation rates (Gordon, 1978, Rumbaut, 1991, Piore 1979, Beals, 1957 and Beltrán, 1987). For these reasons, one would expect that younger individuals would be more likely to use a pan-ethnic term, than their older counterparts. The results displayed in Table 4-3 confirm these predictions.

Table 4-3: Age and Self-Identification

| Age Categories | Self-Identification—3 Categories |                                       |                      |
|----------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
|                | National Origin                  | National Origin and<br>Hispano/Latino | Hispano or<br>Latino |
| 18 – 29        | 25.6%                            | 7.0%                                  | 67.4%                |
| 30 – 44        | 11.0%                            | 18.0%                                 | 71.0%                |
| 45 – 64        | 20.0%                            | 16.9%                                 | 63.1%                |
| 65+            | 30.4%                            | 21.7%                                 | 47.8%                |

Sixty-seven percent of those individuals in the 18 - 29 age category prefer a pan-ethnic term, while 25.6% chose national origin. Even a higher percentage of pan-ethnic identification was discovered among those respondents in the 30 – 44 age category (71%). This higher figure may be due to the fact that some of the respondents in the first category are still undergoing the developmental process of self-definition. Follow-up research would be necessary here, in order to investigate where this younger group would lie ten years in the future. In addition, length of stay may be a factor that also explains the smaller figure in the first age category. Almost fifty-eight percent (57.8%) of the respondents in the 18 – 29 category had lived in the US ten years or less, compared to

41.6% among those between 30 and 44 years of age.<sup>4</sup> These results are not surprising given the high incidence of recent immigrants among the 18 – 29 age group.

The most interesting finding of these figures is the distribution among the 65 and older group. Among this group, 65.2% have lived in the US at least 11 years and 39% have resided in the US for over 20 years. While they indicated the highest preference for national origin (30.4%), close to half (47.8%) self-identified using the term *Hispano* or *Latino*. This result is surprising, given that these individuals probably emigrated as adults, who presumably were educated in their countries of origin and thus are much more likely to actively maintain ties and loyalty to their home country.

Perhaps what can be extrapolated from the 21.7% who chose to self-identify using national origin and a pan-ethnic term is that length of stay in the receiving country may be an important factor in the adoption of pan-ethnic identification. Furthermore, for those who continue to see themselves as part of the home country, multiple complimentary identities may be a means for maintaining a foothold in both the sending and receiving countries or as Michael Jones-Correa calls it, “the politics of in-between” (1998: 124). This notion is of great significance to this study and thus will be revisited later on.

## **Education**

On average, *Latinos/Hispanics* are less likely to have completed high school than other population groups in the US. Although high school completion rates increased among *Latinos/Hispanics* between the 1990 and 2000 Census (50% to 57% respectively), the group still lags behind non-*Hispanics whites* (88%) (U.S. Census Bureau). This study

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<sup>4</sup>Please see Appendix A for length of stay and age table.

did not examine completion rates, but instead attendance at the primary, secondary and post-secondary level. Therefore, it is useful to discuss attendance rates for Hispanics at the national level for comparison with the Paterson data.

Nationally, 27.3% of Latinos/Hispanics had less than a 9<sup>th</sup> grade education, compared to 4.2% of non-Hispanic whites. In addition, 15.7% of Latinos/Hispanics had been a 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade education (without a High School diploma) and 46.4% had graduated from High School and/or had attended a college or university. In the Paterson sample, 13% of all respondents had some primary level education, while 39.8% had attended high school and almost 50% had a post-high school education (see Table 4-4). In all but Community 2, over 80% of respondents had either at least some high school education or above. Clearly our respondents had higher levels of education than the national average. However, this is still consistent with the national data because Mexican

Table 4-4: Educational Attainment of Selected Latino/Hispanic Communities

|                  | Educational Attainment <sup>a</sup> |           |                |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
|                  | Primary                             | Secondary | Post-Secondary |
| Community 1      | 9.1%                                | 36.4%     | 54.5%          |
| Community 2      | 20.6%                               | 42.6%     | 36.8%          |
| Community 3      | 15.4%                               | 30.8%     | 53.8%          |
| Comparison Group | 10.1%                               | 41.4%     | 48.5%          |
| Total            | 13.0%                               | 39.8%     | 47.2%          |
| N=246            |                                     |           |                |

<sup>a</sup>. Inclusion in Primary, Secondary and Post-Secondary categories does not require completion.

Americans, the largest national-origin group in the US, have the lowest educational attainment rates of all Latin American origin groups. Given the prevalence of other Latin American origin groups in Paterson (i.e. Spanish-speaking Caribbean and South American nationalities), the higher educational attainment rates were to be expected. As in this case of age, one may wonder how educational attainment affects pan-ethnic



identification. The data in Table 4-5 highlight a trend indicating that as educational attainment increases so does individuals' preference for pan-ethnic identification. This is consistent with results of other surveys (Hero, 1992: 58-59). However, it must be noted that there is a slight drop (1%) in pan-ethnic identification between those individuals with some high school education and those with post-secondary education. Although, the decline is not very significant, it is possible that those individuals with high educational levels have a slight preference for national origin or multiple identities given the negative implications of identifying as a Hispano or Latino in the US.

Also important in these findings is the link between apparent links between self-identification on the basis of national origin and the lowest level of educational attainment. Of those respondents who said they had some level of primary education, a third chose national origin as their identity (see Table 4-5). This result is important

Table 4-5: Educational Attainment and Self-Identification

| Educational Attainment | Self-Identification-3 Categories |                                     |                    |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
|                        | National Origin                  | National Origin and Latino/Hispanic | Hispanic or Latino |
| Primary                | 33.3%                            | 13.3%                               | 53.3%              |
| Secondary              | 15.1%                            | 16.1%                               | 68.8%              |
| Post-Secondary         | 15.7%                            | 16.5%                               | 67.8%              |
| Total                  | 17.6%                            | 16.0%                               | 66.4%              |
| N=238                  |                                  |                                     |                    |

because it reflects either an inability or a lack of interest among the least educated individuals to think of themselves in pan-ethnic terms. Since education tends to make persons more cosmopolitan, it may be the case that less educated individuals are more likely to think of themselves in more localized terms (i.e., members of a particular village or town). If this is the case, clearly this difference in definition as to what constitutes

community has implications for Latino/Hispanic identity and participation. If, in fact educational attainment does have an effect on pan-ethnic identification, we can also infer that the emergence of a Latino/Hispanic identity would be more likely in communities with Latino/Hispanic populations with higher indices of educational attainment.

### Income

The US Census Bureau data for the city of Paterson, NJ reports that in 1999 14.2% of households with a Hispanic householder had incomes of less than \$19,999. Another 35.7% and 23.7% of those households had incomes of \$20,000 – \$44,999 and \$45,000 - \$74,999 respectively.<sup>5</sup> As Table 4-6 shows, there is a significant income disparity between the Comparison Group and the three religious communities. Over seventy-three percent of Communities 1 and 2 reported a combined household income of less than \$45,000 in the year 2000. This percentage is significantly higher than its counterpart for the city. While over two-thirds of individuals at the two Catholic communities had household incomes of \$45,000 or less, according to the Census, slightly less than half (49.9%) of the Latinos/Hispanics in Paterson are in the same income

Table 4-6: Household Income of Selected Communities

|                  | Income Categories |                   |                  |           |
|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------|
|                  | \$20,000 or less  | \$20,001-\$45,000 | \$45,00-\$65,000 | \$65,000+ |
| Community 1      | 33.3%             | 40.4%             | 14.0%            | 12.3%     |
| Community 2      | 35.8%             | 37.7%             | 17.0%            | 9.4%      |
| Community 3      | 45.5%             | 18.2%             | 27.3%            | 9.1%      |
| Comparison Group | 82.0%             | 10.1%             | 2.2%             | 5.6%      |
| Total            | 55.2%             | 25.7%             | 10.5%            | 8.6%      |
| N=210            |                   |                   |                  |           |

<sup>5</sup>See 1990 US Census Data, Paterson City – US Census Lookup.

category. Community 3 fared somewhat better. Sixty-three percent of respondents reported a household income of \$45,000 or less while 36% reported household income exceeding \$45,000. The disparity between figures for the religious communities versus those for the Latino/Hispanic population for the city as a whole can be explained by calling attention to the notion that increases in income result in increases in secularism. Therefore, those Latinos/Hispanic with higher income levels are less likely to be actively participating in religious communities.

The figures for the Comparison Group are the most concerning. Among those individuals not participating in the three selected religious communities, 82% of those surveyed said their household income was under \$20,000. This result is contrary to the Census data, which reports that only 14.2% of Hispanic householders in the city of Paterson have household incomes below \$19,999. There are two possible explanations for this discrepancy. It is possible that those surveyed by phone underreported their earnings for a lack of trust of who was collecting the information.<sup>6</sup> Also, this result may be due to an error in the collection of data.<sup>7</sup>

In Table 4-7, the results of how income affects self-identification are displayed. The figures in this table show an interesting pattern. As income increases, pan-ethnic identification appears to decline. At the \$20,000 or less income category, the findings almost 80% (77.7%) of survey respondents prefer a pan-ethnic term. However, by the time income rises to \$65,000 or more, pan-ethnic identification has decreased to about one third of those surveyed. It is not surprising that 67.2% of the total preferred terms

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<sup>6</sup> Since surveys in the three religious communities were handed out in person at church functions with the approval and support of all pastors, it is probable that those receiving the survey in person were more trusting than individuals surveyed by phone.

<sup>7</sup> Although instructed to provide household income, individuals may have erroneously reported individual income.

Table 4-7: Income and Self-Identification

|                   | National Origin | Self-Identification–3 Categories        |                    |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------------|--------------------|
|                   |                 | National Origin and Latino and Hispanic | Latino or Hispanic |
| \$20,000 or less  | 13.4%           | 8.9%                                    | 77.7%              |
| \$20,001-\$45,000 | 23.1%           | 15.4%                                   | 61.5%              |
| \$45,001-\$65,000 | 13.6%           | 31.8%                                   | 54.5%              |
| \$65,000 or more  | 38.9%           | 27.8%                                   | 33.3%              |
| Total             | 18.1%           | 14.7%                                   | 67.2%              |
| N=204             |                 |                                         |                    |

like Hispano or Latino, given that over half of the sample identified their income as being \$20,000 or less. However, the apparent negative relationship between income and self-identification is important and deserves some discussion.

The term Hispanic was created by the US government to address a growing number of the population of Latin American heritage that did not neatly fit into the established categories, i.e., Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban. The Latino/Hispanic identity automatically categorizes the individual as a minority in this country. Further, minority status often carries with it undesirable characteristics and implications of under-class status, relative to the majority (Hero, 1998 and Giménez, López III and Muñoz, 1992). Given the history of discrimination and exploitation of minorities in the United States, some level of rejection to the term Hispanic, and also Latino is to be expected.

In attempting to explain the relationship between income and self-identification, Suzanne Oboler's work provides some insights. She argues that Latin American immigrants are forced to reassess values, gender roles and identities upon arrival in the US. These re-examinations take into account the new context in which immigrants find themselves, but they also incorporate the values that immigrants transplanted from their countries of origin. She notes:

Social class values were clearly a determinant of both their sense of self and the ways in which they positioned themselves in a society that applied to them a label with negative connotations. People with middle-class background immediately pointed out that the term was derogatory, but they recognized that, derogatory or not, that is what they called (1992: 23).

Recognizing how social class can factor into the process of identity (re) construction, it is possible to extrapolate that for those immigrants who are at the lowest level of the economic bracket identifying as Hispano or Latino provides a cushion of solidarity with other immigrants in the same position. Thus, for them, Hispanic or Latino identification is a tie that binds them to others with similar struggles.

On the other hand, for those middle-class immigrants identified by Oboler, a pan-ethnic term simply can attach unwanted negative stigmas of poverty, bad habits, lack of education, etc. As the example provided below demonstrates, for these immigrants, at least initially, rejecting the Latino/Hispanic label is the best recourse. Miguel is Chilean and spent a number of years in Switzerland undertaking graduate studies with the World Council of Churches. Miguel prefers to be identified as Latino Americano and expresses his disagreement with the notion of one Hispanic culture, given that it refers to “a Hispanic community with 30 different cultures.” Although Miguel currently falls into the lowest income category, he adds “my European education allows me to separate myself from the stereotypes associated with Hispanics in the United States” (Personal Interview, 2000). Miguel’s statements serve as an example that at least some immigrants are aware of the implications of being labeled a minority in the United States. Whether those implications are seen as advantages or disadvantages is up to the individuals. For Miguel, clearly they were a disadvantage, one that he was happy to be able to disassociate from.

### **Length of Stay in US and Migration Status**

Both length of stay and migration status can be contributing factors to the process of identity construction. How long immigrants have lived in the US has important implications for incorporation, acculturation and citizenship (Hero, 1992, and Jones-Correa 1998). Furthermore, the longer an individual lives in this country, the less likely they are to return to their country of origin, thus, affecting how the immigrant sees himself/herself vis a vis their home and adopted countries.

Perhaps, the most basic political right in the US, the right to vote, requires US citizenship. Thus, whether immigrants chose to become citizens or to remain legal residents is viewed as a reflection of their commitment to this country. Choosing not to become a citizen is linked to what Jones-Correa refers to as the “myth of return.” Although this study is interested in whether either of these factors indeed has an empirical effect on pan-ethnic identification, since length of stay has an impact on citizenship acquisition, it is useful to look at these variables together.

Using the Census 2000 figures, we can compare migratory status in the city of Paterson at large with that of the four samples in the study. Of Paterson’s 32.8% foreign-born population, 83.2% were individuals born in Latin American countries. Thirty-five point three percent of all foreign-born individuals were naturalized citizens. Given that, even for legal permanent residents, the naturalization process can take years, we can infer from these figures that Paterson’s Latino/Hispanic population is comprised of relatively recent migrants. This assumption is confirmed by Census 2000 data reporting that 47.4% of Paterson’s foreign-born population arrived between the years of 1990 and 2000.

For the majority of our sample, the numbers of foreign-born individuals living in the US for less than 10 years were slightly lower. For the two Catholic communities, 34.9% and 32.9% of foreign-born individuals reported living in the US 10 years or less.<sup>8</sup> The smaller numbers of respondents and large proportion of recent immigrants in the Protestant community resulted in over 50% of those surveyed indicating a stay in the US of 10 years or less. Yet, the comparison approximates the figures for the general Paterson population. Among that group, 40.5% had lived in the US a maximum of ten years.

Looking at the figures for our sample from the opposite perspective, we can see that over 60% and 56.7% of respondents in the Catholic communities had lived in the US for at least 11 years. It is at least partly for this reason, that we find much higher citizenship rates among those communities than those for the Protestant, the Comparison group or the city of Paterson's foreign-born population. While approximately 60% of active Catholics were citizens, only 38.5% of the Protestant group and 41.4% of the Comparison Group had acquired US citizenship or were born citizens (in the case of Puerto Ricans and second generation individuals).<sup>9</sup> These results are consistent with the assumption that the longer immigrants live in the US the more likely they are to acquire citizenship.

Table 4-8 displays results for respondents' self-identification according to the duration of their stay in the United States. These data confirm the assumption that the

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<sup>8</sup>See Table A-4 in Appendix A.

<sup>9</sup>See Table A-5 in Appendix A and Table 4-10 "National Origin for Selected Paterson Communities." Twenty-four point three percent of the sample was born US citizens (either in Puerto Rico or in the continental US). Therefore, the majority of our sample still had to acquire US citizenship through naturalization.

individuals most likely to use a pan-ethnic identity are those who have lived in the US between 11 and 20 years. Closely following are those respondents who indicated their length of stay as 2 – 10 years (67.5%) and those who've resided in the US more than 20 years (69.6%).

Table 4-8: Length of Stay and Self-Identification

| Length of Stay (in years) | Self-Identification—3 Categories |                                          |                   |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------|
|                           | National Origin                  | National Origin and<br>Hispano or Latino | Hispano or Latino |
| 1 or less                 | 27.3%                            | 18.2%                                    | 54.5%             |
| 2 – 10                    | 15.6%                            | 16.9%                                    | 67.5%             |
| 11 – 20                   | 11.7%                            | 16.7%                                    | 71.7%             |
| More than 20              | 15.9%                            | 14.5%                                    | 69.6%             |
| All my life               | 50.0%                            | 5.6%                                     | 44.4%             |
| Total                     | 17.9%                            | 15.3%                                    | 66.8%             |
| N = 235                   |                                  |                                          |                   |

This is consistent with the notion that longer periods of stay in the US have a positive effect on incorporation, acculturation and citizenship.<sup>10</sup>

Three important patterns emerge from these data. First, for those respondents who have been in the US for one year or less, the preference for pan-ethnicity is over 50%. This finding is significant because it suggests that those individuals are adopting a pan-ethnic identity quite rapidly. During personal interviews many individuals acknowledged that their use of terms like Hispano or Latino began in US. Therefore, for over 50% of those individuals with a year or less of US residency, the process of adopting pan-ethnicity is rather fast. What the data does not tell us is whether this preference for pan-ethnicity indicates the simple use of terminology or whether it is the acceptance of Latino/Hispanic identity as identity that is defined by cultural and linguistic characteristics, as well as by a shared immigrant experience.

<sup>10</sup>See Table A-6 in Appendix A.



Second, preference for a pan-ethnic identity appears to increase with length of stay until the level of “more than 20 years.” This result is not surprising. As Jones-Correa notes many Latin American immigrants are initially sojourners. As a sojourner your identity is constructed in relation to your home country. The country of origin is not only where your sense of self was constructed, but it is also where you intend to return (98 and 113-114). Therefore, it is probable that time away from country of origin will negatively impact self-identification on the basis of national origin.

On the other hand, as time passes and immigrants recognize that the dream of return is unlikely, immigrants begin to re-examine their identities, incorporating the new contextualized experiences in the adopted country. Therefore, one can anticipate that that longer someone stays in the US, the more likely they would be to begin seeing commonalities with immigrants of shared cultural and linguistic backgrounds. In addition, although there may be a rejection of the pan-ethnic term, with time there is also a realization that the terms Hispanic and Latino are imposed by the larger society, even when the immigrant attempts to distance him/herself from them (Oboler, 23).

Third, although length of stay apparently has a positive relationship with self-identification, the data show that those respondents who indicate they have lived in the US “all my life” are less likely to chose pan-ethnicity. Fifty percent of those individuals prefer national origin as their identity. Once more this finding can be explained by the overrepresentation of US-born-Puerto Ricans in the category. Though they may reside in the same neighborhoods as other Latin American groups, their reality is quite different. Unlike other immigrants, they struggle with “being American” although they are not fully accepted as Americans in their home country. This results in a heightened sense of

nationality amongst this group, which accounts for the decline in preference for identification on the basis of pan-ethnicity.

Obtaining US citizenship is viewed as one of the clearest indicators of incorporation into US society. It is the opinion of some that most post-World War II immigrants as sojourners or individuals who migrate, but fully intend to return to their home countries (Jones-Correa, 92). If one agrees with the argument that citizenship is a marker of incorporation and thus of potential political participation, then, one should be encouraged about the data in this sample since over 50% of those surveyed were US citizens at the time the data was collected.<sup>11</sup> Of that 51%, 48% were Puerto Ricans or US-born Latinos/Hispanics. Therefore, a slight majority of those who identified as US citizens made a choice to become citizens.<sup>12</sup>

Table 4-9 illustrates how migration status possibly affects self-identification. Contrary to what might be expected, it is those individuals who are not citizens, but instead legal residents who have the highest indices of pan-ethnic identification. While 63.0% of citizens preferred to use terms like *Hispano* or *Latino*, almost 73% of non-citizens self-identified using one of the two terms. In order to understand this result, the country of origin of the respondents, in particular those who are citizens must be taken into consideration. Of those individuals who indicated having US citizenship 48.4% were either born in Puerto Rico or in the United States of Puerto Rican descent, 21% were Dominican, 19.7% were from a South American country, primarily Peru, and 10% were from Cuba or Central America.

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<sup>11</sup>See Table A-5 in Appendix A.

<sup>12</sup>See Table 4-10 below.

Table 4-9: Migration Status and Self-Identification

|                | National Origin | Self-Identification—3 Categories         |                   |
|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------|
|                |                 | National Origin and<br>Hispano or Latino | Hispano or Latino |
| Citizen        | 20.2%           | 16.8%                                    | 63.0%             |
| Legal Resident | 14.1%           | 13.1%                                    | 72.7%             |
| Other          | 13.3%           | 26.7%                                    | 60.0%             |
| Total          | 17.2%           | 15.9%                                    | 67.0%             |
| N = 233        |                 |                                          |                   |

The distribution of countries of origin in the citizenship category is important.

Puerto Rico's special political status with the US, would lead one to suspect that Puerto Ricans in the US would be more likely to assert their national identity more strongly, than Latin Americans from other countries. Therefore, given their overrepresentation in the citizenship group, it is not surprising to find a larger percentage of respondents (20.2%) who self-identify on the basis of national origin.

### Country of Origin

Since country of origin affects citizenship, one may wonder whether individuals from particular countries are more or less likely to prefer pan-ethnicity versus national origin. These data are depicted in Table 4-11. First, however, Table 4-10 presents the breakdown for country of origin for each of the survey groups, in an effort to continue situating each community in a socio-economic context. As can be seen, Dominicans make-up the largest percentage of the total, 30.5%, while South Americans come a close second with 26.7%. It must be mentioned that the South American category is composed of a majority of Peruvians. Peruvians accounted for 56.9% of the group, while Colombians were the only other national group that had a significant percentage of the

Table 4-10: National Origin for Selected Communities in Paterson, NJ

|                  | United States | Countries (or Regions) of Origin |                    |        |                         |               |
|------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------|-------------------------|---------------|
|                  |               | Puerto Rico                      | Dominican Republic | Mexico | Central America or Cuba | South America |
| Community1       | 14.3%         | 14.3%                            | 23.8%              | 3.2%   | 11.1%                   | 33.3%         |
| Community2       | 8.8%          | 13.2%                            | 23.5%              | 1.5%   | 23.5%                   | 29.4%         |
| Community3       | 0%            | 0%                               | 23.1%              | 0%     | 30.8%                   | 46.2%         |
| Comparison Group | 3.0%          | 23.2%                            | 40.4%              | 12.1%  | 3.0%                    | 18.2%         |
| Total            | 7.41%         | 16.9%                            | 30.5%              | 6.2%   | 12.3%                   | 26.7%         |
| N = 243          |               |                                  |                    |        |                         |               |

total with 32.3%. This distribution is indicative of some of the changes in the Latino/Hispanic population that inner cities, particularly in the Northeastern region of the US, have been experiencing. As in many cities in the Northeast, Paterson's Latino/Hispanic population has historically been largely composed of Puerto Ricans. Although Paterson's silk mills brought Peruvians to the city in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, those families were few in numbers (Baía, 1999). Although, between 1990 and 2000, the numbers of Puerto Ricans as a percentage of the total Latino/Hispanic population in Paterson has declined, Puerto Ricans still constitute the largest Latino/Hispanic group in the city.<sup>13</sup> In the year 2000, Puerto Ricans composed 32.1% of Paterson's Latino/Hispanics population. Dominicans, the only other national group approximating Puerto Ricans, constituted 20.5%, South Americans (primarily Peruvians and Colombians) made up 18.5% of the population. According to the Census Bureau, the only other group composing more than 10% of Paterson's Latino/Hispanic population was the "Other Hispanic or Latino" category with 16.3%.

<sup>13</sup>The 1990 Census reported that 46.2% of the Latino/Hispanic population in Paterson was composed of Puerto Ricans, compared to 32.1% in the year 2000.

Comparing these figures with the results from this study, we can conclude that Paterson is a multi-Latino/Hispanic city. The numerical decline of Puerto Ricans and the immigration of other national origin groups, like Peruvians, Dominicans and Colombians is not only changing the demographics of the city, but also its social, economic and political dynamics. Furthermore, the fact that a significant number of all Latinos/Hispanics in the city identify as “other Hispanic or Latino” validates the demographic changes occurring in the city.

In the discussion on citizenship above, I raised the hypothesis that Puerto Ricans would be more likely to strongly assert their national identity relative to other Latin American groups. The results in Table 4-11 do not confirm that hypothesis. In fact, Puerto Ricans rank third in their preference for pan-ethnicity. However, these results must be qualified. The results below tell us that Puerto Rican nationals strongly prefer self-identification on the basis of pan-ethnicity. Conversely, the data for individuals born in the US highlights that almost 60%, of those persons, self-identify on the basis of national origin.

The high preference for national origin among US-born respondents can be explained in this manner. When asked their preferred identity, 40% of the respondents born in the US, who selected national origin, indicated a nationality other than American, while 60% wrote in either American or a combination of American and another identity. As mentioned earlier, the majority of individuals in the US-born category are of Puerto Rican decent. Given the role that Puerto Rico’s political status has had on identity

Table 4-11: Country of Origin and Self-Identification

| Country (or Region)<br>of Origin | National Origin | Self-Identification—3 Categories         |                   |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------|
|                                  |                 | National Origin and<br>Hispano or Latino | Hispano or Latino |
| United States                    | 58.8%           | 17.6%                                    | 23.5%             |
| Puerto Rico                      | 15.0%           | 12.5%                                    | 72.5%             |
| Dominican<br>Republic            | 14.9%           | 14.9%                                    | 70.3%             |
| México                           | 13.3%           | 6.7%                                     | 80.0%             |
| Central America or<br>Cuba       | 7.1%            | 17.9%                                    | 75.0%             |
| South America                    | 17.7%           | 19.4%                                    | 62.9%             |
| Total                            | 17.8%           | 15.7%                                    | 66.5%             |
| N = 236                          |                 |                                          |                   |

construction among Puerto Ricans in the US, it is likely that the 40% choosing an identity other than American are simply asserting their Puerto Rican identity (Oboler, 27). The remaining 60% represent two distinct groups.

Oscar will represent the first group. He is an 18 year-old college freshmen of Ecuadorian heritage. He has no contact with Ecuador and does not speak Spanish fluently. For him identifying as American is the only identity he can relate to. Terms like Hispanic or Latino have little meaning for him.<sup>1</sup> For these individuals, acculturation has reached the level of some white ethnics, where there is recognition of one's heritage, but accompanied by an almost complete linguistic and cultural incorporation into US society (Feagin and Feagin, 38-39).

The second group reflects individuals with hyphenated identities. These survey respondents chose combinations of nationalities such as Peruvian-American or Dominican-American. Hyphenated identities enable persons to continue to identify with the country of origin (or the country of heritage) and still assert one's incorporation into

<sup>1</sup> Personal Interview, September 2000.

US society. A pan-ethnic identity represents a new identity binding the individual to others of similar cultural, and linguistic characteristics. Hyphenation asserts a bi-cultural identity, an addition to a pre-existing identity, instead of an adoption of a new identity. Hyphenation can be seen as an intermediate space between national origin and pan-ethnicity. It must be recognized that hyphenation need not be a transitional phase on the road to pan-ethnicity, but it is instead a safe and comfortable way of asserting the joining of past and present selves.

With respect to the other national origin groups (non-US born), one should note that Mexicans have the highest use of pan-ethnic identification. Mexicans only constituted 6.2% of all groups surveyed, but 80% of them prefer pan-ethnicity as their primary form of self-identification. Central Americans and Cubans had the second highest index (75%) of the use of the terms *Hispano* or *Latino*, while Puerto Ricans (born on the island) came in third. It is possible that the groups with the greatest preference for pan-ethnicity may be reacting to their smaller numbers relative to the larger Latino/Hispanic population of Paterson. Whereas Dominicans recognize their large numbers in the city and therefore have a larger pool of compatriots with whom they can identify, Mexicans, Central Americans and Cubans must look to other groups outside of their own national community.

### **Conclusion**

The findings presented in this chapter demonstrate that, at least in the city of Paterson, there is evidence supporting the notion that a pan-Latino/Hispanic identity exists. Respondents of different socio-economic backgrounds, communities, religions, countries of origin, etc overwhelming identified a pan-ethnic term as their preferred ethnic

identity. This result is extremely important that given that much of the literature on the topic has either denied its existence or at best labeled it an instrumental identity used to extract resources from the state (Giménez, López and Muñoz, 1992, and Padilla, 1985).

Chapter 4 contextualized identity construction in these communities and examined what socio-economic indicators played a role in immigrants' self-identification preferences. Analysis of these data tell us that when one controls for all other factors, only income and length of stay are found to be significant. Negative coefficients for income confirm what the tables above displayed, that as income increases, preference for pan-ethnicity declines. The opposite is found in the case of length of stay, where analysis revealed a positive relationship with self-identification using a pan-ethnic label.

The negative relationship between income and pan-ethnicity can be interpreted as support for instrumentalist explanations of Latino/Hispanic identity, as lower income groups recognize the advantages of adopting those labels. However, the positive relationship with length of stay gives credence to the notion that there may be more to this emerging identity than just calculated decisions made relative to a limited supply of state resources. This issue is explored more carefully in the following chapter. Chapter 5 reports the findings of in-depth interviews attempting to give meaning to the notion of a pan-ethnic identity. In addition, it examines the role of active religious involvement in the construction of Latino/Hispanic identity.



## CHAPTER 5 CONSTRUCTING AND RECONSTRUCTING THE IMAGINED LATINO/HISPANIC SELF

### **Introduction**

After much debate and controversy, Census 2000 opted to categorize Latinos/Hispanics as “persons of Hispanic or Latino origin.” Responding to criticism of previous census questionnaires, Census 2000 differentiated among ethnic, racial and national categories. Therefore, Latino/Hispanics were asked to include themselves under the all-encompassing multi-cultural, multi-racial, multi-national “persons of Hispanic or Latino origin.” Latinos/Hispanics (as well as all other groups) could subsequently identify themselves using one or more racial categories and according to ethnic or national heritage. For Latinos/Hispanics, the categorization scheme adopted by the Census meant that they could provide information about national origin or heritage, but in essence, they, once more, were treated as one monolithic group.

Categorizing individuals to whom we now refer to, as Latinos/Hispanics has long been a complex and contentious topic. There are questions as to who should be included in the category (i.e. only people from Latin America and the Caribbean or Iberians as well?). The importance of nationality has also been hotly debated (i.e. why not simply allow people to indicate their country or birth or heritage?) Yet, probably the most controversial of all issues has been that of the use of an all-encompassing category (i.e. what term should be used? How does one term capture the diversity of the population? etc). The use and/or acceptance of an umbrella term that captures numerous nationalities,

cultures and in some cases languages is central to the notion of the existence of a Latino/Hispanic identity. For some, that notion is a simple myth.

The last chapter argued that at least in the city of Paterson, that was not the case. The data presented show that most respondents chose to self-identify on the basis of a pan-ethnic term. This chapter takes a more in-depth look at the notion of a pan-Latino identity and investigates the following questions: 1) how and under what context is this identity constructed and articulated, 2) what do the terms Hispanic and Latino mean, and 3) does use of Latino/Hispanic identity substitute or complement national identities? This chapter will argue that Latino/Hispanic identity is a true identity that does not replace, but exists alongside national identities. Latino/Hispanic identity is neither primordial, nor instrumental. Instead it must be understood as an ongoing social construction process that responds to such factors as immigrants' previous identities, the adaptation experience, and the multi-national, multi-cultural character of the receiving communities.

### **Origins of "Hispanic" and "Latino"**

Before embarking on an investigation of the questions raised above, it would be appropriate to briefly discuss the terms "Hispanic" and "Latino," as used by the media, US Census Bureau and other government and non-government agencies. According to Grace Flores-Hughes, Chairman of the Executive Board of the *Harvard Journal of Hispanic Policy*, the term "Hispanic" did not originate from the Census Bureau. Instead, she argues that the term emerged in the 1970s from the Office of Education of the US Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW). HEW requested opinions from representatives of the "Hispanic" and Native American communities on an educational study it had published. Although the study did not address ethnic categories, both groups

refused to cooperate with the government agency until the issue of ethnic categorization was addressed. This refusal led to the creation of the Task Force on Racial/Ethnic Categories, in 1973, whose purpose was to generate appropriate ethnic categories to be used in data collection by HEW (Jones-Correa and Leal, 1996).

The Task Force grappled with some of the same issues that academics and members of the community, alike, still debate today. The Task Force discussed and later rejected the term “Latino,” primarily due to its relation to the Latin language and the Roman Empire. The term Latin was also discarded because its inclusion of some Mediterranean groups was seen to dilute the impact of Civil Rights legislation intended to protect historically discriminated groups in the US. The term “Hispanic” was proposed as a means of limiting the intended category only to those individuals of Spanish ancestry. It was the adoption of the term “Hispanic” by HEW that prompted the term’s use by other federal government agencies, including the Bureau of the Census. Jorge del Pinal, chief of ethnic and Hispanic studies at the Bureau of the Census, notes that the adoption of the category Spanish/Hispanic origin “was just a way to come up with a term to fit this amorphous group” (*New York Times* p. E6 in González, 1992 as cited by Jones-Correa and Leal 1996: 216).

Pinal’s reference above to Latinos/Hispanics as “this amorphous group” has important implications for the discussion of a pan-ethnic identity. As we shall see below, the notion of a pan-ethnic identity has been challenged from numerous fronts. First is the assertion that the term “Hispanic” was created by government agencies and thus does not constitute a true identity that emerged out of the group it intends to represent. Instead, Martha E. Giménez argues the “Hispanic” category is a “racial label used as a code word

for behavioral patterns associated with poverty, destitution and deviant/criminal behavior" (1992: 12). Second, a Latino/Hispanic identity is said to eliminate the rich cultural, linguistic, historical and racial diversity of the people of Latin America (Oboler, 1992: 22). Finally, some scholars do not dispute the existence of a pan-ethnic identity rather; they view it as concerted choice on the part of individuals to extract resources from the state (Padilla, 1985: 63). In the following section, we discuss these three perspectives and their implications for the study of Latino/Hispanic identity.

### **Imposing Latino/Hispanic Identity?**

The expansion of Spanish-language media and the rise in popularity of Latino/Hispanic singers, actors and athletes have fueled the assumption of a common bond uniting persons of Latin American origin living in the US. Media companies and marketers have recognized the purchasing potential that lies in the Latino/Hispanic community. Using language, along with cultural, historical and value-oriented references, they have engaged in process that aims to coalesce distinct national origin groups into one target population. In print, radio and television the terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" are used interchangeably to refer to this group, which is presented as differentiating itself from the dominant Anglo population and at the same time using the bonds of language and history to congregate the distinct national representations of the same culture. Borrowing from Benedict Anderson, Daniel Matos notes that, in essence, "Univisión is participating in the social construction of an imagined community" (2 as cited by Alcoff and Mendieta, 2000: 29).

It is difficult to argue that the availability of Spanish language media has not had an impact on pan-ethnicity. At the very least, it has disseminated the terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" to a much larger audience in a short period of time. In addition, Spanish-

language media, particularly television, has taken advantage of the national popularity of celebrities, like Jennifer López, Ricky Martin and Sammy Sosa, to claim them as “Latino/Hispanic” stars who have “made the cross-over” to an Anglo audience. Claiming these icons as “Latino/Hispanic” (as opposed to Puerto Rican or Dominican) makes these individuals models for all persons of Latin American background, not just for those of the same national origin. In addition, using these celebrities as representatives of all Latinos/Hispanics attempts to reverse the negative connotations of poverty and crime associated with these pan-ethnic terms. Thus, now, being Latino/Hispanic is “in.”

Even if one agrees that media has made the usage of pan-ethnicity more widespread, one might still question whether it constitutes a true identity. The fact that marketers promote a Latino/Hispanic identity does not mean that individuals of Latin American heritage self-identify that way, particularly given the fact that it was the US government that created the terms. Giménez, notes,

The inclusion in the census of a self-identification question that forces Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Central and South Americans and Spaniards to identify themselves as “persons of Spanish/Hispanic origin” has resulted in the political and statistical construction of a new minority “group” whose origins can be traced to statistical manipulation and the pursuit of immediate political advantage rather than historical foundations (10).

According to Giménez, it is the United States’ “[obsession] with racial/ethnic politics” (7) that has resulted in the use of terms “Hispanic” and “Latino,” which perpetuate negative views of persons of Latin American background as racial minorities. In addition, “Hispanic” and “Latino” eliminate the intended results of Affirmative Action policies by allowing employers to hire persons with Latin American heritage as if they were members of historically discriminated groups.

Giménez' assertion of the "statistical construction of a new minority group," although stated in a somewhat inflammatory manner, is an important one. If we are to believe in the existence of a Latino/Hispanic identity, should we treat it as a statistical construct with little or no meaning or as a representation of collective views of self? My interviews and other research on the subject provide some interesting insights to this question and point towards an explanation that Latino/Hispanic identity is in fact a US construction, but one in which Latinos/Hispanics are agents and not passive recipients of an imposed identity.

Pedro is a recent immigrant from Chile. He recently moved to Paterson with his wife and children to work in the Christian Reformed Church. In the surveys, both he and his wife, Eva, self-identified as "Hispanos."<sup>1</sup> During our interview, I inquired about why they had chosen that category and what it meant to them. Pedro stated, "Through the census we became more aware of the concept of being Hispanos. When we were in Chile, we really didn't speak much about being Hispanos, but instead Latinos. In Latin America you really didn't hear about Hispanos." Eva adds that they learned this identity in the US. She states,

I have to give up some of my own identity and be able to insert myself, without going with my flag before me and saying, this is who I am. No. There isn't really a need to say it. I am always going to be Chilean. I will continue being Hispana. What is important is how I am going to insert myself ... I am coming to work. I am coming to bear fruit for this country too.

For both, the notion of being "Hispano" is something that they acquired in the US. This adds credibility to the view of Latino/Hispanic identity as a US government creation.

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<sup>1</sup>All of the interviews were conducted by the author and tape-recorded, if permitted by the interviewee, during the year 2000. The names of the informants have been changed to protect their confidentiality. Most of the interviews were conducted in Spanish. The words used are either the author's translation or, in the case of English interview, direct quotes from the informants.

Yet, Eva's statements make the explanation more complex. Adopting the Latino/Hispanic identity is related to her ability to incorporate herself into this new society and the contributions she wants to make. Now, being Chilean and Hispana is about her dreams and goals and her efforts to achieve them in the US. She has appropriated the term "Hispana" and uses it to express her visions of how she will fit into this larger society.

Eduardo provides another example of immigrants' agency in the reconstruction of pan-ethnic terms. Eduardo arrived in Paterson in the early 1970s in search of a better future. He quickly established a network of friendships with other young Peruvians. During his free time, Eduardo and his friends enjoyed partying, which resulted in him evading his responsibilities to his wife and children. Eduardo's lifestyle took a dramatic change when at the urging of his wife, he began actively participating in the Catholic Church. Today, he links his ethnic identity to this lifestyle change and his new community. "After being in the Church, I don't have the same friends. The Church changed my friends... They are from different nationalities and lead a different life... I am Hispano... I don't want to use Peruvian because it is negative... This is my community and they are Hispanos."

For Eduardo the change in lifestyle that resulted from his Church participation also produced a change in identity. His Peruvian identity is rooted in what he now understands as his irresponsibility to himself and his family. He associates his drinking and other destructive behaviors with his Peruvian friends and with being Peruvian. Transforming his life in the multi-cultural, multi-national context of a Hispanic church enabled him to adopt a new identity, which he has reconstructed into a more positive

sense of self. These examples validate the notion that a Latino/Hispanic identity is a US creation, but they also illustrate that the adoption of that identity is not a passive process, but instead one in which there is both individual and collective agency. As Eduardo Mendieta notes, “in the process of learning to become Latino or Hispanic what were originally artificial and imposed labels now take on a different character” (48).

### **Latino/Hispanic Identity—the Cultural Homogenizer**

A Latino/Hispanic identity rests on the notion that peoples from Latin America share a common history, language, and culture. Moreover, those common characteristics bind those who share them and distinguish them from those who don't. Yet, one of the most common criticisms of the idea of a pan-ethnic identity is that it eliminates the diversity inherent in the populations it intends to represent. Latin America is a region of many languages (from native languages to Spanish), many cultures, and many religions. Some argue that a label that attempts to encompass this diversity only misrepresents its peoples' heterogeneity. Suzanne Oboler, reminds us that

... it is important to ask to what extent the appeal to the legacy of the Spanish colonial rule can justify the homogenization under the label Hispanic of the subsequent experiences of at least 23 million citizens, residents, and immigrants of Latin American descent. Can this appeal account, for example, for the legacies of Mexican Americans/Chicanos and Puerto Ricans, whose respective post-Spanish colonial histories and cultures has since been differentially shaped by their experiences in the United States? ... And is it rooted in an accurate perception of the diversity of Latin American populations in their own countries of origin? (1995: xiii).

Giménez would answer “no.” In fact, for the scholar, using such labels “[reveals] a racist or at best ethnocentric understanding of the characteristics of Latin Americans and of the populations of Mexican and Puerto Rican descent forcibly brought under US hegemony” (10).



Even a cursory understanding of Spanish colonial rule in the Americas lends credence to Oboler's argument. The Spanish system was one in which strict racial, religious and class hierarchies demarcated social, economic and political status. Thus, is it justified to use the culture of a system so characterized by inequality to represent individuals whose ancestors experienced it so differently? Moreover, doesn't utilizing the "Hispanic" justify and even glorify the Spanish conquest? These criticisms are valid, but my interviews indicate that while immigrants recognize the negative aspects of the Spanish conquest, most of those interviewed expressed pride in their Spanish linguistic, cultural and behavioral roots. In essence, the term "Hispanic" only labels the pride they already feel in their Spanish cultural heritage.

Mercedes is the first female President of the Hermandad del Señor de los Milagros at the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist. She states,

I consider myself Hispana or Latina. Peruvian, because I come from South America... I am from Peru, but wherever I go, for me it is a privilege to say that I am Latina... [Latina means] The roots that were brought to me by the Spanish conquistadors, the blood that runs through us. I mean Hispanic blood.

Mercedes is equating being "Hispano/a" with Spanish rule and the cultural, ethnic, racial and class hierarchies that it established in its colonies in the Americas. This can be interpreted as discounting the impact of those hierarchies and the contributions of the subordinated and exploited ethnic and racial groups. Though this may be the case, this argument does not discount the appropriateness of the use of pan-ethnic terms.

Mercedes' case, as well as the examples that follow, suggest that at least among first generation immigrants the ethnic and racial hierarchies from the country of origin are transplanted and then used to reconstruct pan-ethnic labels and identities. As Jones-Correa reminds us, "Latin American immigrants' identities are shaped not just by the

choices they make in the US, but also by the weight of the choices made in the past. Previous constructions of identity have a kind of inertia to them, they become the raw materials for ethnic choices ...in the US" (1998: 123)

Leo identifies himself as Puerto Rican, but he is also "Hispano." When asked what "Hispano" means to him, he states, "[it] speaks to the Spanish language and is related to the conquest because that is where the language comes from. We have different cultures but the same language... The cultures are very similar. We have the same heritage... that separates us from North Americans." Leo's use of the word "conquest" is significant because he acknowledges that the mixture of cultures he refers to happened by force. Yet his explanation for his identity emphasizes the results; a culture and language in common which differentiates him from North Americans.

Hector echoes Leo's explanation of the term "Hispano." "Hispano means speaking the same Spanish language. Having the same heritage, black, Spanish and indigenous. We share the same ancestry." He adds, "when you are in a group with English-speakers, you seek out Spanish speakers because *la sangre Hispana jala* [Hispanic blood draws you]." Like Mercedes, Hector's views are interesting because for him the Latino/Hispanic identity is primordial; it is something innate (carried in the blood). This notion of the apparent primordial character of identity is an important one and will be addressed further on in this chapter.

Most interviewees shared Leo's and Hector's opinions. Even when they did not choose to self-identify on the basis of some pan-ethnic term, they tied the term "Hispano" or "Latino" to first a shared language and second a shared ancestry based on Spanish colonialism. However, a few respondents chose to link the terms to more than language

and ancestry. Being “Hispano” in the United States was also related to patterns of behaviors and beliefs. This lends support to the notion that there is a process of reconstruction and negotiation of pan-ethnicity, where the dominance of Spanish culture is not the sole unifying factor behind Latino/Hispanic identity.

Carmen considers herself Dominican and “Hispana” and she relates being “Hispana” to a “shared sense of morality, for example the importance of the family... of the extended family.” Isabel concurs. She first acknowledges the importance of speaking Spanish in defining “Hispana,” but adds that it also refers to “shared traditions and a way to raise your children, which differentiates us from Anglos.” As an example of shared traditions Alberto notes that there is “the expectation that women will enter marriage as virgins.” This is also part of being “Hispano.” Finally, Alma says she used to identify herself as Honduran, but now sees herself as “Hispana” and for her that means “a shared language, history, food, music and a sense of humor.” I asked her to explain what she meant by a sense of humor. She described situations in which she tried to joke with a North American and received a look of confusion, where had she been joking with a Latino/Hispanic, s/he would have understood her immediately.

### **Pan-ethnicity as an Instrumental Identity**

Published in 1985, Felix Padilla’s study of Puerto Rican and Mexican-American political cooperation in Chicago became one of the first scholarly works on Latino/Hispanic identity. Padilla used instrumentalism to explain how Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans in Chicago constructed a Latino/Hispanic identity to extract resources from the state. According to the instrumentalist approach, ethnicity is a tool used by political leaders and individuals for political and economic gain (Rabushka and Shepsle, 1972, Bates, 1983, and Hechter, 1986). In their study of New York City

politics, Glazer and Moynihan described minority groups as political interest groups who, in a context of limited and unequal distribution of resources, employ ethnicity to gain concessions from the state apparatus (1963). Using this approach, Padilla argues that “Latino” ethnic consciousness,

represents an apparent mechanism to pursue, in some instances, the collective interests of some Spanish-speaking groups. This will then mean that as Spanish-speaking people to begin to adopt a consciousness as “Latinos,” they appear to represent a distinctive, all-embracing interest group population (66).

Thus, in the context of Chicago, Puerto Ricans and Mexican-Americans’ shared disadvantaged position, vis-à-vis other groups in the city, united them in an attempt to improve their communities’ economic and political status.

Padilla’s instrumentalist or strategic view of Latino/Hispanic identity is supported by the fact that leaders of the Latino/Hispanic community have been central to the proliferation of the terms. Calderón agrees with Padilla’s instrumentalist interpretation and notes that the term “Hispanic” emerged from government agencies and “politicians at the federal level.” He differentiates it from the term “Latino” which he explains was “popularized to symbolize the commonalities in issues and collective action when national coalitions involving Puerto Ricans and Chicano movement groups developed” (1992: 39). Finally, Hernan Badillo, a one time Puerto Rican Congressman from New York City, indicated that Latino/Hispanic politicians promoted the use of the term “Hispanic” since they “stood to gain more political representation and government services as a result of the designation” (González, 1992: E6 as cited by Correa and Leal, 217).

As Badillo mentions political leaders have a vested interest in promoting a strategic Latino/Hispanic identity because it has the potential to translate into more

voters, more supporters and more resources for these communities. The same can be said for community activists, who recognize the value of larger numbers in pushing for concessions from the state. The Padilla and Calderón studies both relied on community activists and leaders for interviews. Thus, it can be argued that their results, which present Latino/Hispanic identity as a strategic choice on the part of individuals, is accurate, but that it only represents the view of those who are directly involved in affecting the distribution of state resources. These individuals participation in the public sphere and/or in the political arena inevitably affects their sense of collective and individual identity. Yet, it is precisely that participation that does not make them representative of the community as a whole.

The strategic calculations found by Calderón and Padilla were virtually absent from my interviews. While nearly all of the informants linked notions of pan-ethnicity to language and culture, only two tied the term “Latino” to a political agenda. Ivan, a young educated Mexican, identifies as “Latino with non-Latinos and with other Latinos, Mexican.” He differentiates between “Hispano” and “Latino.” He notes, “Latino is political, not cultural, but the argument between the two terms is useless.” Claudia, a young woman of Puerto Rican descent, shared this view. She related the term “Latino” to individuals, who are trying to make a political statement. These individuals were both young professionals educated in the US higher education system. Both referred to the term “Latino” as an awareness of the political incorrectness of using “Hispano” because of its links to the Spanish conquest. Even though both referred to “Latino” having a political meaning, neither related it to the extraction of resources from the state.

Using data from the Latino National Political Survey (LNPS), Michael Jones-Correa and David Leal also dispute the instrumentalist view a pan-ethnic identity. In a previous chapter, I discussed some of the limitations of the LNPS and the significantly different results of my survey regarding respondents' preference for pan-ethnicity. I will not examine those results again here. However, I will use Jones-Correa and Leal's analysis of the LNPS because unlike my survey, the LNPS included questions about political ideology, attitudes and concerns.

Jones-Correa and Leal correctly note that if one were to accept the instrumentalist explanation of Latino/Hispanic identity, it would be necessary to see a connection between political concerns and attitudes and pan-ethnic identification. In other words, that there would be a significant correlation between measures of political beliefs and self-identification on the basis of a Latino/Hispanic identity. The authors found no significant relationship between political concerns and pan-ethnicity. They write:

Panethnic identity does not lead to greater recognition of cultural or political commonalities... contradicting both culturalist and instrumentalist explanations of Latino panethnicity... [It] has a significant effect on some policy issues... People who choose a panethnic identifier seem to do so in general, regardless of specific circumstances and apart from any strategic consideration... People's attachment go beyond simple instrumentalism, the fact that people's identities may be constructed doesn't argue against the suggestion that they may have real attachments to those constructed identities (238 and 240).

Jones-Correa and Leal make two important points. First, the data do not support the idea that pan-ethnicity is a strategic choice made with the intention of receiving benefits in return. Second, and most important, is that the notion of a constructed identity does not invalidate the "truth" of individuals' affective attachments to that identity. In other words, acknowledging that identities are social constructions does not mean that those identities are less real for those who hold them.

### **Identities as Social Constructions**

Of the surveys conducted in Paterson, NJ, over 66% of respondents identified primarily as "Hispano" or "Latino" (see Table 4-2). If one were to explain this preference for pan-ethnicity using the instrumentalist approach, one would also expect to find a highly mobilized Latino/Hispanic community in the city. In fact, as the historical chapter indicated, Latinos/Hispanics, though constituting over 50% of population, have yet to elect a Latino/Hispanic mayor and currently only hold 2 out of 7 city council seats. In addition, interviews did not provide any evidence that individuals choosing pan-ethnicity as their preferred identity did so as a result of a calculated choice based on the potential benefits to self and community. On the other hand, does the fact that most of the informants tied Spanish culture and language to the terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" imply that Latino/Hispanic identity is primordial?

Primordialism focuses on the emotional and psychological aspects of identity. Instead of describing identity as a calculated strategy, as instrumentalists would, those who ascribe to the primordialist perspective believe identity is inherited by birth and it persists through time. Primordialists emphasize the physical as well as the cultural ties that bind individuals and distinguish them from others (see Barth, 1969, Geertz, 1973, Van de Berghe, 1978, Ballis Lal, 1995). This approach would explain Latino/Hispanic identity as result of shared cultural traits that are transplanted from the countries of origin to the receiving countries (Giordano and Torres, 1986, Padilla 1990). Thus, the "Hispanic" or "Latino" labels are not imposed, but simply a representation of identities that immigrants bring with them.

Due in part to primordialism's emphasis on physical markers and the fixed nature of ethnicity, few scholars today, use this approach. However, this author believes

understanding why Latino/Hispanic identity is not primordial is important to finding a more useful theoretical framework to study it. In fact, an examination of my interviews suggests that primordialism cannot be simply discounted. As previously mentioned, Mercedes and Hector, both described being “Hispano/a” in terms of characteristics that are carried in one’s blood. In addition, virtually all interviewees’ definition of the terms “Hispano” and “Latino” were related to 1) the Spanish language and 2) cultural traits, i.e., food, music, values, religion.

In an attempt to test whether this belief of a shared culture, my survey asked respondents whether all persons of Latin American heritage in the US shared cultural characteristics that united them as a Latino/Hispanic community. The results are displayed in Table 5-1. Of those respondents that agreed with the question, 18.9% preferred national origin as their identity, 14.6% used a combination of national origin and pan-ethnicity and 66.5% chose a pan-ethnic term. Of those that disagreed with the notion of a shared culture, 76.5% preferred the terms “Hispanic” or “Latino, while 5.9% used a combination and 17.6% used national origin. Interestingly, the no opinion category was split primarily between those self-identifying on the basis of pan-ethnicity or a combination of pan-ethnicity and nationality.

Table 5-1: Shared Culture and Self-Identification—3 Categories

| Survey Respondents | National Origin | Self Identification<br>National Origin and<br>Latino or Hispano | Latino or Hispano |
|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Agree              | 18.9%           | 14.6%                                                           | 66.5%             |
| No Opinion         | 8.3%            | 41.7%                                                           | 50%               |
| Disagree           | 17.6%           | 5.9%                                                            | 76.5%             |
| Total<br>N=214     | 18.2%           | 15.4%                                                           | 66.4%             |



It must be noted, again, that in contrast to the Latino National Political Survey (de la Garza et al, 1992), these survey results indicate a strong preference for pan-ethnicity. Sixty-six percent of the respondents preferred pan-ethnicity to other forms of self-identification. Yet, even with the apparent tendency towards pan-ethnicity, the notion of a shared culture does not seem to affect whether respondents chose Latino/Hispanic identity. Seventy-six percent of respondents who disagreed with the question on shared culture identified as "Hispano" or "Latino." Moreover, no significant relationship was found between the two variables. This result confirms those of Jones-Correa and Leal in their examination of the LNPS data. They report that, "Pan-ethnic identity doesn't have a profound effect on how respondents perceive cultural commonalities" (230). Finally, as mentioned above, the primordialist perspective views identities as fixed. Both my results and those found by Jones-Correa and Leal indicate the presence of multiple identities. The primordialist approach cannot account for these findings.

Thus, where does this leave us? If Latino/Hispanic identity is neither primordial nor instrumental, then what theoretical framework can best explain it? In my view, the constructivist approach is most useful in explaining Latino/Hispanic identity. It is my argument that Latino/Hispanic identity is a socially constructed identity which is the product of a combination of state promotion, transplanted identities from the country of origin, the immigrant experience and the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-racial context of the receiving country.

Immigrants bring with them a set of values, traditions, beliefs, languages, etc, all of these elements, along with the state's categorizations and the experiences of adapting to a new environment, are involved in the process of ongoing identity construction.

Expressing this view, Eduardo Mendieta states, "The construction and development of new identities is partly a process of negotiation that includes acceptance and assimilation, but also rejection and disavowal.... For us, Hispanic and Latino are not fate, but a quest, a choice and even an alternative.... It is in this sense that Hispanics are a people in the process of becoming" (46-47).

Describing Latinos/Hispanics as a "people in the process of becoming" does not mean that pan-ethnicity replaces national identity. Instead, research suggests that pan-ethnicity functions as one among multiple situationally-specific identities. Please see Table 4-1 for the results from the self-identification questions of the surveys conducted in Paterson. As discussed in the previous chapter, these results support the argument that a Latino/Hispanic identity does exist. Yet, more importantly, the data provide evidence that national and pan-ethnic identities co-exist with one another (Jones-Correa and Leal, 1996). In essence, Latino/Hispanic identity functions as a complement to, not a substitute for national identities. This conclusion is confirmed by my interviews. In most cases, informants self-identified as "Hispano/a" or "Latino/a", they always noted their country of origin. Mateo says "I am Hispano here, in Puerto Rico, elsewhere Puerto Rican." David provides another example, "I am Dominican first and Hispano second." Katia identifies herself as "Hispana, but I am Dominican too, and very proud!"

Ismael, a pastor beginning his own Spanish-language ministry, provides another example. He notes, "I never considered myself Hispano until I came to Paterson. Then I met other Latin Americans and learned about them and began using the term Hispano. But asking someone where you are from is important because it makes people feel comfortable." When asked about identity, Manuel says, I consider myself "mestizo and

Hispano, but if the question is specific, I say Peruvian.” Pablo and Iris, a young married couple who just recently arrived in Paterson, both self-identified as “Costa Rican.” Yet they add, “but it depends on the question, because we also use Latino.” Furthermore, Nadia not only agrees that self-identification depends on the question and context, but also “on the person’s education.” According to Nadia, the person’s education level determines whether they can understand that as a black Colombian who lived with her white mother, she never was exposed to her African roots. In this US, she has been able to learn about that aspect of her identity and thus she states, “on applications I write black Hispanic... I am exploring my blackness, which I never got to do before [while living in Colombia].”

Finally, it Rosa, a Dominican woman, illustrates the idea of multiple identities best. She explains, “when I arrived in 1973, I would have said Dominican, but now I understand that I am part of a larger mass as Hispana... [being Hispana means that] I am also Puerto Rican, Cuban, etc.” Rosa has not substituted her Dominican identity for pan-ethnicity. Neither has she replaced her Dominican nationality with that of Puerto Rico or Cuba. For her, the “Hispana” label contains a multiplicity of identities that she now can experience. In a given context she can feel Cuban, Puerto Rican or Dominican. Those identities don’t compete with each other. Rather, identities co-exist and depending on the context, “in the process of becoming” Rosa and other immigrants, negotiate the salience of each.

In Jones-Correa and Leal’s analysis (1996) the importance of pan-ethnicity becomes apparent when they consider not just primary but also secondary identities. Ranking identities has the benefit of enabling scholars to gain a sense of the weight that a

particular identity may hold. Yet, if one accepts the argument that multiple identities co-exist and are negotiated, then placing worth on one or more of those identities appears contradictory. One identity may be more salient than another in a particular context. Taking a snapshot of the value of one identity at a particular time may tell us very little about the importance of others in other settings. Therefore, I prefer to think of identity construction as, “a complicated process whereby Latinos retain multiple identities, multiple interactional settings and diverse ‘situated selves’ at one point in time” (Trueba, 12).

### **Which Term Should We Use? “Hispanic” or “Latino”**

Since I have argued, that a Latino/Hispanic identity is a true identity, co-existing with national identities, it is important to address one final issue. Which term “Hispanic” or “Latino” is best to represent this identity? In this discussion, I have used them interchangeably, unless my informants have differentiated between the two. In addition, in mass media and everyday language the terms are used as synonyms. However, much of the scholarship on the topic and Latino/Hispanics in general, favors the use of the term “Latino.”

David Hayes-Bautista and Jorge Chapa favor the term “Latino” because it encompasses all Latin American nationalities. For them, “Hispanic” links Latino/Hispanic identity to Spain and they correctly argue that some Latin American societies, like Brazil, have no ties to that country. Furthermore, “Latino” is seen to include not just immigrants, but their descendants, who in some cases have lived in the US for three or four generations (Oboler, 4). Other scholars, like José Calderón, argue that the fact that the term “Hispanic” emerged out of US government agencies rules out the appropriateness of the term. In contrast, for the scholar “Latino” is more appropriate

because it draws attention to all Latin American nationalities and has been used by activists in addressing issues of concern to all persons of Latin American heritage. As support for his argument Calderón provides evidence that individuals using “Hispanic” were of higher socio-economic status and “were protecting their property and managerial positions.” Whereas those preferring “Latino” “tended to build panethnic unity around issues that threatened the interest of the entire Latino community and to form coalitions with other oppressed groups around structural issues they had in common” (43).

My interviews do not support the difference that Calderón calls attention to. Overwhelmingly, those who self-identified pan-ethnically preferred the term “Hispano/a.” It was that term that represented the Spanish language, culture and traditions that as discussed above are seen as uniting Latinos/Hispanics in the US. While the majority defined “Latino” as a synonym for “Hispano” (i.e., a person who speaks the language, and adheres to cultural, behavioral and at times moral norms), some respondents expressed some confusion as to the meaning of “Latino.”

Manuel defined “Hispano” as a term describing people “who share same history, the same Spanish culture and language, but not always.” When asked about “Latino” he states, “that is a more modern word. I think it refers to everyone from South America. It doesn’t include people from the Caribbean.” A few other informants, including Fatima, who like Manuel is from a South American country, related “Latino” to Latinoamericano. For them Latinoamericano described the South American continent. Nadia, along with another respondent, noted that “Latino” included other Romance languages. Thus, “Latino” was a much broader term that also embraces Italians.

Finally, as was mentioned above, only persons interviewed attached some political meaning on the term “Latino.” This may be the result of the non-politicized character of Latino/Hispanic identity in Paterson. Yet, the fact that the terms have not been politicized does not mean that Latinos/Hispanics are not aware that the terminology associated with identity is politically significant. As Jesus states,

I became Hispanic here. I learned to be Latino here... The multiplicity of categories causes confusion. It leads people to say ‘they don’t even know what they are.’ Hispanic roots exist. I don’t understand the difference between “Hispano” and “Latino.” The lack of a unifying term is the problem of the Hispano leadership. It shows a lack of identity. Anglos know that and exploit that. Where is the courage to recreate an atmosphere of development in this country?

Jesus, like Claudia and Ivan who linked a political meaning to “Latino”, is a young professional. Jesus has also been an activist in his community, in particular, addressing deficiencies in the local public school his children attend. Perhaps, Jesus, Claudia and Ivan interpretations of the term “Latino” and identity, more generally, provide a view of how Latino/Hispanic identity may develop in the future. However, regarding the differentiation between the terms “Hispanic” and “Latino,” all expressed their frustration at the pointlessness of the debate.

### **Conclusion**

Arguing against the existence of a Latino/Hispanic identity is becoming a more futile enterprise. The proliferation of the terms in the media, in government circles, among the Latino/Hispanic political leadership, in common speech, etc, make it increasingly difficult to ignore. In addition, the research presented here, as well as that of Jones-Correa and Leal, among others, provides evidence that for some communities around the country, pan-ethnicity is at least one among multiple identities an individual may hold.

Some scholars view Latino/Hispanic identity as a mechanism for Latin American immigrant communities to mobilize politically (Trueba, 1999, Jones-Correa, 1998, Oboler, 1995, Calderón, 1992, Hayes-Bautista and Chapa, 1987, Treviño, 1987, Padilla, 1985). That politicization of Latino/Hispanic identity appears to be absent in the context of Paterson. While national origin groups use the term, it has yet to be the cement that holds together a successful multi-national coalition. However, the cases of Jesus, Ivan and Claudia, may provide a window into the possibility of future politicization.

Still, what I believe to be most important for this discussion is that Latino/Hispanic identity should be understood as the product of an ongoing construction process. In that process of construction, in particular contexts, some people may represent it in primordial or instrumental terms. This does not mean that Latino/Hispanic identity is either primordial or instrumental. The research presented here illustrates that pan-ethnicity involves negotiation among multiple identities is part of a dynamic process that defies the fixed nature or primordialism and that goes beyond mere instrumentality.

## CHAPTER 6 ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

### **Introduction**

Chapter 4 reported the findings of the surveys of the sample populations in Paterson and compared them to the Census 2000 data available for the entire city. The chapter also began to identify possible relationships between variables, such as income and self-identification. However, the analysis in chapter 4 did not attempt to establish causation between variables. This chapter reports the findings of statistical analysis aimed at testing the two hypotheses of this project. The two hypotheses of this study are:

H<sub>1</sub>: Pan-ethnic identification among Latino/Hispanic Christians increases with active religious involvement.

H<sub>2</sub>: The nationality and ideology of the Church leadership directly affects whether pan-ethnic identification emerges, i.e., where the parish priests are North American, pan-ethnic identification is more likely, where parish priests are Latin American or Latino/Hispanic, the prospect of pan-ethnic identification decreases.

Given that one of the methodological aims of this project was to combine methods to more accurately and effectively explain the complexities in understanding identity, this chapter also reports the quantitative findings in their respective contexts using descriptive narratives resulting from participant observation.

The two hypotheses above test whether two variables, active religious involvement and church leadership had an effect on pan-ethnic identification. While this study was primarily interested in these two independent variables, it was necessary to also include other variables in the analysis to test which factors were important to the



research questions and what, if any, effect they had on the dependent variable.<sup>1</sup>

Significance tests indicated that the model was significant at the .000 level. In addition, the Cox and Snell and Nagelkerke  $R^2$  (.307 and .426) indicate that the variables included in the equation explain a significant proportion of the dependent variable.<sup>2</sup>

### Discussion of Results

Looking at the results of the analysis, it becomes evident which variables have a significant effect on pan-ethnic identification. They are: 1) the Comparison Group, 2) Household Income of \$65,000+, 3) Attitudinal Question on Religious Participation, 4) Length of Stay in the US-11-20 yrs., 5) Length of Stay in the US-20+ yrs., and 6) Educational Attainment-Primary School.<sup>3</sup> To further strengthen the analysis, other variables were eliminated from the equation. The results are presented in Table 1 below. Although the R square values decreased somewhat they still demonstrate that approximately 30% of the variance in pan-ethnic identification is accounted for by the

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<sup>1</sup>Since the dependent variable, pan-ethnic identification, was not continuous, it was necessary to carry out logistic regression analysis. Dummy variables were created for the categories, i.e., Latino/Hispanic identification = 1 and All Other identifications = 0. Prior to carrying out this statistical analysis, correlations were run to test relationships between independent and dependent variables. After eliminating variables that had no significant correlation with the independent variable, the following variables were included in the regression: gender, educational attainment, income, migration status, length of stay in the US, religious participation, religious participation changes self-identification, religious participation increases friendships with groups of other nationalities, church leadership and the survey samples.

<sup>2</sup>Please see Table A-5 of the Appendix A.

<sup>3</sup>Household Income of \$65,000+ = Annual Household income of \$65,000 or more  
 Attitudinal Question – Relationship between religious participation and identity = Participation in a religious community has led to a change in my identity – agree  
 Attitudinal Question – Relationship between religious participation and identity = Participation in a religious community has led to a change in my identity – disagree  
 Length of Stay in the US – 11-20 yrs. = Immigrant indicates living in the US for a period of 11-20 years  
 Length of Stay in the US – 20+ yrs. = Immigrant indicates living in the US for a period of 20 years or more  
 Educational Attainment – Primary School = Highest level of education attained is primary school  
 OLOL = Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church sample  
 Comparison Group = Phone survey random sample  
 Attitudinal Question – Participation in a religious community reduces prejudice = Participation in a religious community has made me less prejudiced against individuals of other Latin American national origin groups - disagree

variables included in this equation. Now that some variables have been removed from the equation, it is possible to examine which variables are still significant and whether they support the study's hypotheses.

Table 6-1: Binary Logistic–Pan-ethnicity and Important Variables Model Summary

| Step | -2 Log likelihood | Cox and Snell R <sup>2</sup> | Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup> |
|------|-------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1    | 238.422           | .243                         | .337                      |

| Variables in the Equation                                                                     |        |      |        |    |      |        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|------|--------|----|------|--------|
|                                                                                               | B      | S.E. | Wald   | Df | Sig. | Exp(B) |
| Comparison Group                                                                              | -2.378 | .411 | 33.470 | 1  | .000 | 10.778 |
| Educational Attainment – Primary School                                                       | -.773  | .461 | 2.811  | 1  | .094 | .462   |
| Household Income - \$65,000+                                                                  | -1.930 | .621 | 9.650  | 1  | .002 | .145   |
| Attitudinal Question -Relationship b/w religious participation and identity (R1) <sup>a</sup> | .261   | .340 | .590   | 1  | .443 | 1.298  |
| Length of Stay in the US – 11-20 yrs.                                                         | .668   | .413 | 2.619  | 1  | .106 | 1.950  |
| Length of Stay in the US – 20+ yrs                                                            | .969   | .388 | 6.233  | 1  | .013 | 2.636  |
| Constant                                                                                      | -.298  | .289 | 1.061  | 1  | .303 | .742   |

<sup>a</sup>For all Attitudinal Questions R1 = Agree, R2 + No Opinion and R3 = Disagree

### Active Religious Involvement

This preliminary analysis does not appear to support the study's hypotheses.

Neither active religious involvement, the variable representing individuals who are involved in lay groups or other religious activities within the church, nor Sunday Worship, the variable designating those individuals who primarily visit a place of worship for the weekly services, demonstrated any significant effect on pan-ethnic identification. For that reason neither was included in the second step of the analysis. This result is surprising for it contradicts the qualitative data acquired during in-depth interviews.

Most of those interviewed, who were selected due to their participation in one of the church's lay groups, described their church community "as a family." It was a place where "nationality isn't important;" where differences are "blurred." What we can draw from this discrepancy in the quantitative and qualitative data is that active church participation is important in that it provides a setting in which barriers of nationality, ethnicity, race and even language can be destroyed. There is a relationship between religious participation and the growth of pan-ethnicity, but the findings did not show it to be a direct relationship. Instead, as the discussion later on in the chapter will reveal, it is a relationship that is complicated by the daily interactions within these congregations, between pastors and members of the congregations, and between these religious communities and the larger community of Paterson.

**Remaining Variables—Comparison Group, Household Income \$65,000+ Length of Stay in the US 20+ yrs.**

The variables that remained significant in the final analysis were the Comparison Group, Household Income \$65,000+ and Length of Stay in US 20+ yrs. The fact that the Comparison Group became significant in the final analysis was not a surprise. First, this population was selected because it was expected to be different. The three communities chosen for this study were religious communities. The Comparison Group, in contrast, was a representation of Paterson's larger Latino/Hispanic community. These individuals may or may not have been involved in any kind of religious participation. The results show that the Comparison Group is 10 times more likely as the Saint John the Baptist community (base category) to identify pan-ethnically. This supports the result reported in chapter 4 where over 90% of the Comparison Group self-identified on the basis of pan-

ethnicity. This finding is important because it hints that pan-ethnicity is much more likely outside of the walls of the church than inside of the walls.

In addition, the Comparison Group was the only group to receive the instrument via a phone call and like all methods of delivery, it carries with it some disadvantages. However, after lengthy consideration of the alternatives (house to house visits and mail surveys) it was decided that delivering the survey via phone call was the best option.<sup>4</sup> Although the analysis demonstrates that the method used to carry out the survey did affect the result, the impact of the method was not sufficient to disrupt the impact of the other variables.

#### **Household Income \$65,000+**

Household Income \$65,000+ designates those individuals who indicated having an annual household income of \$65,000 or more. As can be seen in Table 6-1, the B coefficient is  $-1.930$  and the  $\text{Exp}(B)$  is  $.145$ . This tells us that the individuals who reported an annual household income of \$65,000 or more are  $.145$  times as likely to identify as Hispanic or Latino than those whose household income was between \$45,000-\$64,999 (base category). This result confirms one of the observations made in chapter 4; mainly, that individuals at the highest income level were less likely to identify on the basis of pan-ethnicity.

Individuals in the highest household income category were the only ones who seemed to be quite divided in terms of their self-identification; 39% chose national origin, 28% chose a combination of national origin and pan-ethnic identification and 33% chose a pan-ethnic term. As mentioned in the previous analysis, individuals in the highest income categories have important reasons for choosing to not identify pan-ethnically. As

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<sup>4</sup>Please see Appendix B for a full discussion of the research methodologies.

Oboler has noted, the stereotypes and negative connotations associated with being “Latino or Hispanic” often dissuade persons from choosing those terms, particularly when their social class status allows them to. It is often easier for individuals who have reached a higher socio-economic class to detach themselves from minority status because their purchasing power can be translated into higher levels of education (for themselves or their children), better employment opportunities and safer and more affluent neighborhoods for their families.

On the other hand, it is also possible that these individuals assert their national origin not because they are dissociating themselves from “minority status,” but because they are proud that their socio-economic standing demonstrates they have “made it” as Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, Peruvians, etc in the US. These individuals are also the ones that have the financial stability to travel more often, thus maintaining ties to the home country. The data collected for this study do not provide enough information to discern which explanation is correct. However, it is my belief that although Oboler’s assumption probably explains part of this result, there is also validity to explanation that some individuals in this income category are asserting national identity and not just disassociating themselves from minority labels.

#### **Length of Stay in the US-20+ yrs.**

Length of stay in the US is another variable previously discussed in chapter 4 as having an important impact on pan-ethnicity. Clearly, the assumption with regards to length of stay would be that the longer individuals remain in the US, the more likely they would be to self-identify on the basis of a pan-ethnic term. The analysis in chapter 4 demonstrated that there was an apparent pattern confirming this assumption, although there was a small drop in pan-ethnic identification among those individuals indicating

having lived in the US 20 years or more. This analysis confirms that as length of stay increases so does the likelihood of pan-ethnic identification (coefficients for Length of Stay in the US 2-10 yrs, Length of Stay in the US 11 – 20 yrs. and Length of Stay in the US 20+ yrs.). Only the B coefficient for Length of Stay in the US 1yr. or less is negative. This result is not unexpected. The fact that these individuals are such recent migrants means that their attachments to home are much greater than those who have been in the US for longer periods of time.

While Length of Stay in the US 11 – 20 yrs. and Length of Stay in the US 20+ yrs. were significant in the first step of the analysis, only the latter retained its significance in the second step. The data tell us that those individuals are 2.636 times more likely to identify pan-ethnically than those persons who reported living in the US “all of their lives” (the base category). This result is important for various reasons.

First, the result provides statistical evidence of our initial assumption; the longer immigrants are here, the more likely they are to “adapt” to the social fabric of this country and less likely they are to retain an identity reflecting solely national origin. This explanation should not be understood as a case supporting assimilation theory. Instead, I see this result as providing evidence that although ties to the home country may be important, the time spent in the host country results in an accumulation of experiences binding immigrants to their new adoptive home.

This “bank” of experiences has implications for identity construction. It is possible to interpret much of the literature on transnationalism as evidence that immigrants’ ties to the home country mean that they have no intention or need to incorporate themselves into the society that has received them. The fact that length of stay variable has a positive

effect on pan-ethnic identification provides evidence to the contrary. Two points are important here. While some immigrants will remain traditional transnationals, their numbers are bound to be small because most immigrants do not have the resources to live in two societies concurrently. Thus, it is likely that the majority will find themselves building ties to the host country, not necessarily by choice, but because it is part of their incorporation process. Pan-ethnic identification can, then, be seen as a key step in that incorporation process.

In addition, if we think of identity construction in constructivist terms we need not think of traditional transnationals as identity nomads. The constructivist perspective assumes that identities change over time. Therefore, the fact that an individual divides his/her time in various places during his/her lifetime does not mean that s/he is devoid of a sense of belonging to those communities. Thus, it should not be surprising to see even transnationals choosing pan-ethnic identification or some combination of pan-ethnicity and national origin.

Another reason why it is important that the variable Length of Stay in the US 20+ yrs. retained its significant is that the base category for length of stay in the analysis was "All my life." The base category refers to persons who were born in the US of Latin American origin or those who arrived in the US as young children. According to the results, those individuals who have lived in the US 20 years or more are 2.636 times more likely to use a pan-ethnic term than those born in the US.

In chapter 4, the discussion noted that many of the individuals who indicated living in the US "all of their lives" were Puerto Ricans living in Paterson. It was mentioned that perhaps the intensified sense of national identity created, in part, due to Puerto Rico's

special political relationship to the US was of importance in this respect. Again, the data collected do not allow me to state with certainty that this is the case. Yet, the patterns in the data seem to show that for those individuals who have lived in the US "all their lives" identity is not tied to length of stay, but instead to another variable. I will conjecture that the political ramifications of a national origin, which does not have a corresponding citizenship, have resulted in a heightened sense of national identity, particularly for those Puerto Ricans who have lived most of their lives in the continental US.

Moreover, it is possible that even for non-Puerto Ricans the shared experiences of being categorized as a minority and an outsider within the context of the larger US society have produced an apparent rejection of the host society and a sense of hyper-nationality. This result is often seen amongst young adults born in the US of Latin American parents. Often when asked about their origin, these individuals ignore their US birth and simply exclaim their Latin American nationality, even when many of them have had very little contact with the country of their parents' birth.

### **Multiple/Complimentary Identities**

One of the most interesting findings of this project was the large percentage of individuals in the religious communities who self-identified using multiple identities. Over 30% of those surveyed in Communities 1 and 3 and 17% of Community 2 chose more than one identity. This indicates that, while in Paterson, pan-ethnic terms have been adopted by the majority of the community, a discussion of pan-ethnicity must be careful not to suggest that embracing pan-ethnic terms signals a substitution of national identities. Similarly to the findings of Jones-Correa and Leal, these results indicate that a pan-ethnic identity is emerging, but that identity is complimentary to national identities.



What must be noted for this study is that the pattern of use of multiple identities was only evident in the religious communities. It is likely that had the Comparison Group received the survey instrument in the same manner as the religious communities that the data would have shown some preference for multiple self-identification. Even if this is the case, the high indices within the religious communities raise the issue of whether this falsifies  $H_1$ .  $H_1$  projected that religious participation resulted in a higher likelihood of pan-ethnic identification. While, high indices of pan-ethnic identification were found, the highest levels were in the larger Paterson sample and not in the religious communities. Does this result, then, falsify the study's hypotheses?

This result is a falsification of  $H_1$ . Yet, more important than the nullification of the hypothesis is its meaning for this study. What this outcome suggests is that the context provided by the religious communities is even more important than once thought. Pan-ethnic identification is a growing reality there, as it is in the larger population. The difference between religious communities and the larger population is that churches are providing a relatively protected space where pan-ethnic identification can grow, but where at the same time nationality can be maintained. It is the co-existence and ongoing negotiation between these two identities that defines the current role of religious participation in the process of ethnic identification.

In an attempt to test the pattern concerning multiple identities, another set of tests was conducted, but this time with a dependent variable that reflected those individuals, who chose an identity which combined pan-ethnicity with a national identity. Table 6-2 shows the results of logistic regression analysis with pan-ethnicity and nationality as the dependent variable. The "R Square" statistics demonstrate that the chosen independent

variables account for a significant proportion of the explanation of the dependent variable. However, contrary to the previous analysis in which pan-ethnicity alone was the dependent variable, here, the expected variables were not significant. Neither, income, nor length of stay was significant in the final stage of the analysis. In fact, length of stay was not included in the regression at all because no significant correlation was found between the duration of stay in the US and choosing to self-identify using a

Table 6-2 Binary Logistic: Pan-ethnicity and Nationality and Important Variables (reduced) Model Summary

| Step | -2 Log Likelihood | Cox & Snell R | Nagelkerke R Square |
|------|-------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1    | 145.849           | .233          | .400                |

Variables in the Equation

| Variables                                                                             | B      | S.E.   | Wald   | df | Sig. | Exp(B) |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|----|------|--------|
| Attitudinal Question – Right to National Festivities (R1)                             | .621   | .645   | .926   | 1  | .336 | 1.860  |
| Attitudinal Question – Right to National Festivities (R3)                             | 1.734  | .820   | 4.470  | 1  | .034 | 5.664  |
| Attitudinal Question – All Latinos/Hispanics share a common culture (R1)              | .129   | .667   | .038   | 1  | .846 | 1.138  |
| Attitudinal Question – All Latinos/Hispanics share a common culture (R2)              | 1.720  | .867   | 3.931  | 1  | .047 | 5.583  |
| Attitudinal Question - Relationship between religious participation and identity (R1) | -1.168 | .604   | 3.740  | 1  | .053 | .311   |
| Attitudinal Question - Relationship between religious participation and identity (R3) | -.161  | .525   | .094   | 1  | .759 | .851   |
| The Cathedral of St. John the Baptist (SJB)                                           | 1.106  | .469   | 5.570  | 1  | .018 | 3.022  |
| La Iglesia Cristiana Reformada El Buen Pastor (EBP)                                   | 1.495  | .717   | 4.343  | 1  | .037 | 4.457  |
| The Comparison Group                                                                  | -8.390 | 16.132 | .270   | 1  | .603 | .000   |
| Constant                                                                              | -2.131 | .643   | 10.990 | 1  | .001 | .119   |

combination of “Hispanic or Latino” and nationality.

After eliminating variables that were not significant in the first step of the regression, five variables remained significant: 1) Attitudinal Question – Right to National Festivities (R3), 2) Attitudinal Question – All Latinos/Hispanics share a common culture (R2), 3) Attitudinal Question – Relationship between religious participation and identity (R1), 4) the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist (SJB) and 5) La Iglesia Cristiana Reformada El Buen Pastor (EBP). What is most interesting about these results is that unlike in the analysis where pan-ethnic identification alone was the dependent variable, here, the responses to attitudinal questions are apparently linked to the choice to identify with a combined identity. In other words, for those individuals who chose to identify using only a pan-ethnic term, the answers to the attitudinal questions in the survey seemed to be unrelated to their choice. Yet, the individuals who self-identified with a combination of nationality and pan-ethnicity seemed to link their attitudes on the mentioned issues with their identity.

### **Attitudinal Questions**

#### **Right to National Festivities (R3)**

This variable refers to survey respondents who disagreed with the following statement, “Each national group represented in the parish can and should celebrate the important festivities of each country (i.e., independence day, day of patron saint)”.<sup>5</sup> The B coefficient for this variable was positive and significant at the 0.034 level. The Exp(B) tells us that those individuals who disagreed with the notion that all should be able to celebrate important national holidays within the context of the church are 5 times more likely to self-identify using a combination of national and pan-ethnic identity than those

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<sup>5</sup>The statement above was given to Catholics. Protestant survey respondents were given the following version, “Each national group represented in this church can and should celebrate the important festivities of each country (i.e., independence day)”.

who responded with “no opinion”. This result may seem counterintuitive, since it would make sense for the people who identify with a combined identity to be in favor of maintaining symbols and representations of nationality. Yet, I will speculate that while individuals may feel as though there should be a space for nationality-based celebrations, they probably also feel that it is more important for the community to focus on what it shares in common and not its differences.

The overwhelming support of respondents for another attitudinal question validates the explanation for the relationship between this variable and self-identification using a combined identity. Table 6-3 indicates that across all identity categories, individuals agreed with the idea that within the context of the religious community, their Christian identity should be more important than their national identity. This explanation is further supported by the opinions to the statement, “Priests or pastors should distinguish between different origin groups when referring to them during sermons or other public speeches.” Table 6-4 shows us that almost 74% of the respondents disagreed with the notion that

Table 6-3: Self-identification-3 Categories and Importance of Christianity over Nationality

| Self-Identification-3 Categories | Importance of Christian Identity over Nationality |            |          |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|------------|----------|
|                                  | Agree                                             | No Opinion | Disagree |
| Nationality                      | 88%                                               | 6%         | 6%       |
| Nationality and Pan-ethnicity    | 82%                                               | 9%         | 9%       |
| Pan-ethnicity                    | 98%                                               |            | 2%       |
| N = 130                          | 91.5%                                             | 4%         | 5%       |

religious leaders should distinguish between national origin groups instead of referring to them as Hispanics or Latinos. That result is expected given the overwhelming support for pan-ethnicity. What is surprising is that 16% of respondents agreed with the statement, and of that percentage, 70% self-identified solely pan- ethnically. Clearly

Table 6-4: Self-Identification-3 Categories and Attitudes on whether priests should distinguish between national origin groups

| Self-Identification –<br>3 Categories | Priests or pastors should distinguish between national<br>origin Groups |            |          |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------|
|                                       | Agree                                                                   | No Opinion | Disagree |
| Nationality                           | 13%                                                                     | 18%        | 70%      |
| Nationality and Pan-ethnicity         | 12%                                                                     | 12%        | 75%      |
| Pan-ethnicity                         | 18%                                                                     | 7%         | 75%      |
| N = 190                               | 16%                                                                     | 10%        | 74%      |

these results demonstrate that respondents feel that their national differences should not supersede the importance of their religious beliefs within the context of the religious community. Nonetheless, what is also evident in these results is an ongoing internal evaluation, in which individuals are constantly trying to set the boundaries of the menu of identities. What is most revealing is that this self-reflection on identity seems to be quite present even amongst those who have made the choice to adopt pan-ethnicity. Thus, this tells us that the adoption of a pan-Latino identity should not be understood as a rejection of national identities.

#### **All Latinos/Hispanics share a common culture (R2)**

Another variable that had a significant effect on whether individuals chose to identify using multiple or complimentary identities was the “no opinion” response to the following statement, “All Latin Americans living in the US, without regard to country of origin, share cultural characteristics that unite them as a Latino or Hispanic community.” Only a small proportion, 5.6%, answered the statement with “no opinion.”<sup>6</sup> Yet, Table 6-2 tells us that those individuals were 5 times more likely to choose a multiple or complimentary identity than those who disagreed.

<sup>6</sup>Please see Table A-9 in Appendix A.

This result has a similar explanation to the one previously discussed. The statement was intended to be a broad declaration of how these individuals viewed themselves in the larger context of other Latinos/Hispanics in the country. Given the fact that many have limited disposable incomes, their knowledge of Latinos/Hispanics outside of their immediate tri-state area is scarce. Although a great majority felt comfortable affirming the declaration, it is not unexpected that those who feel their identities in flux would be hesitant to identify with an enormous group of people with whom they will never have contact.

Given this explanation, it is possible for someone to argue that it is contradictory for someone to have difficulty with identifying with the broader concept of all Latinos/Hispanics sharing cultural traits and at the same time choose pan-ethnicity or a combination of pan-ethnicity and nationality. Yet, it is likely that for the respondent the choice is not contradictory at all. While we know that the term “Hispanic” was first used by the US Census Bureau, for most Latin Americans the terms “Hispanoamérica” and “Latinoamérica” are familiar. In addition, the growth and accessibility of Spanish-language media in the US has fueled the use of these terms. Thus, it may be much easier for someone to say, “I am Peruvian and Latino,” than it would be for the same person to agree with the idea that millions of people from many different countries all share cultural traits. It is likely that for the individual who is negotiating between multiple or complimentary identities, the image of Hispanic or Latino conjures up someone who he knows, thus making it possible for him to identify with them. It is another issue completely to acknowledge the inherent implications in that assertion, which link the

individual to an ever-growing mass of people. In this sense, Latino/Hispanic identity has yet to become what termed “an imagined political community” (1991).

### **Relationship between religious participation and identity (R1)**

As mentioned before, this variable designates individuals who agreed with the statement, “Participating in lay groups has changed the way I identify myself”. The remark was broad intentionally, as the intent was to use interviews to gauge whether respondents were making the connection between religious participation and self-identification on the basis of ethnicity. It soon became clear that some individuals were interpreting the statement the way it was intended but others understood it as an affirmation of a more fervent religious commitment. For this reason, the statement was later changed to “Since I have been participating in lay groups, I have begun to identify myself as Hispanic or Latino.”

Changing the initial statement confirmed the confusion that had been occurring. Out of 84 individuals who received the initial claim 46% agreed, 18% answered “No Opinion” and 36% disagreed. These results show significant variation in the responses. While this can simply be part of how people felt about the issue, it is likely to be the result of the broad nature of the question. Of those who agreed, 59% self-identified as Latino/Hispanic, 15% chose multiple or complimentary identities and 26% used nationality.<sup>7</sup> Although there was apparent confusion with the initial statement, once we examine the break-downs of the responses by self-identification category, the expected patterns become apparent. If “identity” was interpreted in terms of ethnicity, it was expected for those who agreed to identify pan-ethnically, which would support H<sub>1</sub>.

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<sup>7</sup>Please see Appendix A for complete figures.

What is significant about negative relationship of this variable to the dependent variable (pan-ethnicity and nationality) is that individuals who agreed with the statement were 0.3 times as likely (than those who answered “No Opinion”) to use a multiple or complimentary identity. This result is supported by the figures above. Agreeing with the notion would mean a higher probability of choosing pan-ethnicity; disagreeing would mean a higher probability of selecting nationality. In particular, the individuals who agreed with the statement are linking their participation to the new sense of community they have acquired about other Latin Americans around them. That sense of a new community or family is at least in part driving their choice to self-identify pan-ethnically.

Further confirmation of this relationship was found after running a correlation between a) those who agreed with the second statement<sup>8</sup> and pan-ethnic identification and b) those who agreed with the second statement and multiple or complimentary identification. For “a” a positive correlation of 0.260 at the 0.008 significance level was found, whereas for “b” a correlation of  $-0.334$  was found at the 0.001 significance level. These statistical relationships provide additional support to the explanation given above. There was a significant positive relationship between those who affirmed that lay group participation had an effect on pan-ethnic identification and the actual selection of a pan-ethnic term. The strong negative correlation for “b” tells us that if someone agreed with the statement they are much less likely to use multiple or complimentary identities, which we expected. Moreover, the statistical analysis confirmed that there was a positive, significant correlation between those who answered with “No Opinion” and those who

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<sup>8</sup>“Since I have been participating in lay groups, I have begun to identify myself as Hispanic or Latino.”



selected multiple or complimentary identities and those who answered negatively and similarly chose a combined identity.

### **St. John the Baptist and El Buen Pastor**

Unlike in the previous analysis where the Comparison group itself was significant in the regression analysis, here it was two of the research sites, which in the final analysis apparently had an effect on whether individuals chose a combined identity. St. John the Baptist (SJB) refers to the larger of the two Catholic churches, the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, while EBP designates the Protestant community of La Iglesia Cristiana Reformada El Buen Pastor (EBP). The statistical analysis demonstrates that the relationship between these two sites and the choice of multiple or complimentary identity was positive. In fact, respondents at SJB were three times more likely to choose a combination of pan-ethnicity and nationality than respondents at Our Lady of Lourdes (the base category). An even stronger relationship is evident at the Protestant research site. Participants at EBP were 4.4 times more likely to identify with multiple or combined identity than individuals at Our Lady of Lourdes.

In order to explain these results it is important to remember that in Chapter 4 it was reported that indeed the communities in which the highest indices of preference for a combined identity were EBP (38.5%) and SJB (34.4%). While most participants still chose pan-ethnicity over all other categories, more than a third of respondents in both of these communities selected multiple or combined identities. Furthermore, it is important to recognize that the survey did not give respondents the alternative of a combined identity. The choices included in the survey were: 1) American, 2) Hispanic, 3) Latino/a, 4) National Origin and 5) Other. This is a noteworthy point because participants had to write-in the choice themselves, which indicates that respondents found it meaningful

enough to take the time to express their views. These are major findings which support the larger patterns uncovered by this study and thus deserve attention.

El Buen Pastor is a church with a long history in Paterson. However, its history as a Latino/Hispanic religious community is only approximately 40 years long. It distinguishes itself from the other communities for its diversity, albeit its small size, and for its strong vision of itself as a social service provider. The first Latin American pastors were Cubans, but as Paterson's Latino/Hispanic community diversified, so did the church's leadership. At the time of the research, El Buen Pastor's leader was a Chilean man who led over a church whose membership consisted of Dominicans, Cubans, Colombians, Salvadorans, Chileans, Costa Ricans and Guatemalans. The fact that EBP, notwithstanding its size, is such a diverse community contributes to the sense of being part of a shared immigrant experience as Latinos/Hispanics in the US. If one national origin group heavily dominated the community, it would be more likely that its members would continue to identify with the nationality that they share. Thus, the preference for pan-ethnicity at EBP is at least in part explained by the church's demographics.

Yet, if there is a clear rationale for why the context in this community contributes to a preference for pan-ethnicity, why, then, did participants also choose multiple or complimentary identities? The answer to the question above can be found in EBP's role as a social service provider. Unlike the other much larger Catholic Churches, El Buen Pastor offered a number of social services, ranging from free English and commuter classes to immigrant settlement assistance programs. The services bring a constant flow of new immigrant arrivals of all denominations to EBP. While most of these immigrants

do not stay as members of the church they embody a group whose ties to the home country are still fresh which is reflected in their self-identification choice.

One may ask, why then, do these new arrivals not prefer to self-identify on the basis of national origin? I will argue that the reason for choosing multiple or complimentary identities is directly related to the Church's vision. The mission of the Church as social service provider is to provide the most needed tools to ease the transition into US society for these new arrivals. Inherent in that mission is the notion that some level of incorporation is indispensable to success. Thus, church members are encouraged to learn English, to legalize their status, to use other members as a valuable resource and to be part of the larger Latino/Hispanic community.

After spending time at EBP, listening to sermons and observing lay group activities, it became evident that the leadership of this religious community was quite different from those of the Catholic Churches. Whereas politics were never mentioned in the Catholic communities, at EBP, the pastor did not seem to fear the topic. Political candidates were never paraded at religious or social gatherings. Yet, the leadership felt comfortable fostering participation not just in their church, but also in their communities. The sermons often raised issues of ethnic discrimination and discussed the struggles often shared by Latin American immigrants in the US (participant observation, 2000).

The Pastor's proactive role with respect to the larger socio-economic and political issues facing the community has resulted in a community in which everyone is encouraged to embrace pan-ethnicity, not as a rejection of national origin, but as a vehicle to success in US society. This vision was evident in the church's Hispanic Day festivities, which are held on October 12<sup>th</sup> each year. On that day, all the nationalities

represented in the membership of the church are encouraged to bring arts and crafts, dishes and folkloric clothes from their countries. Each country represented is given a table on which to display their crafts and their national flag. Everyone is asked to visit all of the tables to learn about the other countries represented. Once all participants sit-down to eat, all of the different national dishes are shared as those who prepared them explain their contents and a bit of the history of each. Finally, after the meal, national groups can play music from their country and showcase a dance for the entire group.

The Hispanic Day festivities are very important for the EBP community because while it allows a space to celebrate national origin it does so within the context of the entire Latino/Hispanic community. The event is called "El Día de la Hispanidad," and its purpose is to bring the entire community together to learn about each other. Therefore, while the Costa Ricans feel excited about showing off "Tico crafts," they do so within the context of learning about the Guatemalan countryside and Dominican merengue. The Hispanic Day festivities are the embodiment of the leadership's vision for church members. Thus, the high preference for pan-ethnicity and for multiple or complimentary identities is at least partly due to the favorable attitudes of the Church leadership which permeate religious teachings, as well as social events at EBP.

This is an important finding that in part supports hypothesis # 2. That hypothesis theorized that the nationality and ideology of the church leadership affected the emergence of pan-ethnicity. Where pastors were North American, higher indices of pan-ethnic identification was expected. The nationality element of the hypothesis was not supported in the case of EBP. While the Church had a Chilean pastor, the indices of pan-

ethnic identification were high. However, I do not believe that this negates the hypothesis because two factors are complicating the case.

First, the sample size was small at EBP and that limits the findings. Second, and more important, is the fact that although the pastor was not North American, the leadership's ideology fit the pattern expected of North American priests. In other words, inherent in the hypothesis was the notion that Latin American pastors would be more likely to foster nationality, than North American priests who would be more likely to approach Latin Americans as Latinos/Hispanics. Pastor Orellana's nationality did not match the expected pattern, but his ideology did. He viewed fostering pan-ethnicity as a necessary tool in improving the socio-economic status of the congregation. Pastor Orellana's ideology is perhaps best described by one of his parishioners, Eva. When asked what is the role of the church with regards to identity construction, she answered, "Education. The pastor constantly does it here. Respecting all of our cultures, but always looking for unity. In fact, the pastor sometimes has to extend his sermon because he is trying to find the right words so that everyone understands what he is trying to teach." Her husband Pedro finished her thought by adding, "The idea is to bring Hispanics in and give them the tools so they can function in the society in which they live in" (personal interviews, 2000).

Like El Buen Pastor, St. John the Baptist was significant, as a research site when conducting the statistical analysis using pan-ethnicity and nationality as the dependent variable. However, the similarities between the two communities are few. They both are Latino/Hispanic churches where many Latin American nationalities are represented. Yet, where EBP is a very small community church, SJB is a historical landmark in the city of

Paterson, which draws thousands of worshippers from nearby cities, as well as from Paterson.

An Irish priest founded SJB in 1865 and throughout its history it has been a church that has primarily ministered to immigrants. Today, 99% of its parishioners are of Latin American background and it counts with approximately 300 registered families, but the two Spanish masses on Sundays draw over 500 worshippers each. Due to its visibility in the city of Paterson, SJB draws a diverse group of Latin American immigrants, new arrivals, as well as established immigrants. Yet, its memberships tends to be individuals who have had a longer presence in Paterson and who have been able to attain at least working to middle class status. Although on most socio-economic indices, the population of SJB is not very different than that of the other two research sites, SJB is a religious focal point in the city. Moreover, its prime location in downtown Paterson and its ornate architecture make it more than a place of worship; it is also a social, economic and political platform for its members.

An Italian American priest, Monsignor Mark Giordani, heads SJB. Father Mark speaks Spanish and has worked hard to make himself a part of the Latino/Hispanic community. During the research, the parish was left with one auxiliary priest, Father Luis Rendón.<sup>9</sup> Although Father Mark is fluent in Spanish, his role in the parish is primarily that of an administrator, while Father Luis handles much of the daily ministerial activities. Father Mark appeared somewhat removed from the dynamics of cultural retention within the context of this church. He understood how important it was for his parishioners to maintain their individual cultures, but for him those were secondary

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<sup>9</sup>Father Luis Gutierrez was brought from Colombia to serve as an auxiliary priest at St. John the Baptist during the 1990's. During the summer of 2000, he was transferred to a parish in Passaic, New Jersey, leaving Father Rendón as the only auxiliary priest.

issues. In his view, what brought parishioners there was their faith and that was what deserved his attention.

For Father Mark, SJB's purpose is to serve a very faithful, but needy community with whatever means he can, as long as they are tied to faith in God and the Catholic Church. Thus, if members of the congregation want to celebrate the feast of a patron saint and drape themselves and the statue of the saint in a national flag, he will not interfere. This tolerance for expressions of nationality have made SJB a necessary stop for foreign dignitaries who often are present at the various parades and processions associated with each national origin group. It is within this context that the brotherhoods of El Señor de los Milagros and San Martín de Porres, which are symbols of Peruvian nationality, have flourished. It must be noted that these institutions have prospered even when the spiritual leaders admit that they do not constitute a "true religiosity, but instead a popular devotion" (personal interviews with Fr. Mark Giordani and Luis Rendón, 2000).

Nationality-based groups, like the Peruvian brotherhoods or the devotions to the representations of Mary (i.e., devotees to Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe), coexist with multi-Hispanic groups, like the followers of the Neo-catechumenate. Father Luis has a clear partiality towards groups like these because he views them as exercises in living one's faith. Whereas for him the devotees to patron saints show their consecration to God on one special day, other groups foster bringing religious teachings into their everyday lives, thus emulating God. In these groups, nationality is barely present, though clearly some national origin groups are more drawn to some groups versus others (for example the Charismatic Renewal group is heavily composed of Dominicans and Puerto

Ricans). Therefore, at the parish level these groups compete for space, visibility and the attention of the religious leadership and yet, they largely remain isolated from each other.

These dynamics present a challenge for the leadership. Father Mark believes in the importance of providing a space for cultural retention, and at the same time desires to foster unity. Yet, his role doesn't allow him the time to be directly involved in the internal dynamics of each group. Father Luis is involved, but his own experience as a Colombian immigrant tugs at his role of spiritual unifier. Father Luis expressed his disagreement with the notion of the existence of a Latino/Hispanic identity. For him those were simply terms used to categorize people. Looking at himself as an immigrant, he questioned what Andean peasants from Peru had in common Dominicans from the capital city? Nonetheless Father Luis was infinitely proud that the followers of the Neo-catechumenate had apparently achieved blurring those differences. Moreover, he wished that result could be replicated throughout the parish. Yet, that replication seemed unlikely.

If Neo-catechumenate followers had blurred the lines of nationality it was not by fostering Latino/Hispanic identity, but instead by a strictly maintained process of isolation from the parish and immersion in the teachings of the Neo-catechumenate movement. The movement emerged in Spain in the 1950s as a response to what its founder saw as Catholics deviation from a lived Christian faith. Followers of "The Way" undertake a lengthy process of re-evangelization, including several rites of passage that may take decades to complete (McCloy, 1997). The process of "re-Christianization" aims to eliminate cultural, nationalistic and ethnic markers. Therefore, it is not surprising that most of the members of the movement that were interviewed concurred that in "El



Camino" (the Way) nationality is never mentioned. While many agreed with Jesus who noted that "[El Camino] offers an opportunity for socialization....a space and a reference group that allows you to say 'those people are like us'" (personal interview, 2000) On the other hand, they also acknowledged the difficulties they encounter understanding each other's variety of Spanish. The members are not taught that they share a common language or culture, instead they share a life path and a long process of learning that they have all undertaken in order to be welcomed into the group.

The issue of membership for the followers of the Neo-catechumenate is key. Unlike the other groups in the parish, their membership is only open to those who have already undertaken 'El Camino.' During your initiation into "The Way" you are assigned to a community that becomes your reference group. Neither the gatherings of those communities nor the Eucharists that all of the communities participate in are open to the parish or the public. Therefore, although we find that participation does provide a space for learning about other nationalities, this space is very limited, including only those who have made a commitment to the movement. The lessons that are learned about co-existence, shared values and culture do not necessarily stretch out to the parish, to the greater Paterson community or to the Latino/Hispanic community in the US. Thus, it was not surprising that 61% of this group preferred a combined identity. It was unexpected, however, to find that 36% self-identified pan-ethnically and less than 4% chose national origin. Here what we saw was that although national origin is excluded it is not eliminated. While only a small percentage self-identified on the basis of national origin, the majority chose to include nationality as one of the multiple identities they carry.

Within the context of SJB, it is perhaps within the Charismatic Renewal movement or the Christian-base communities that we found the most favorable environment for the growth of pan-ethnicity. The communities welcome and invite newcomers from all nationalities. Many of the interviewed in these communities described them as “support networks.” As Rodrigo, a Peruvian member of the Charismatic Renewal stated, “I began making friends of other nationalities at Church...Church becomes a home, a place of solace for Hispanics because of the loneliness you experience when you migrate.”

Many of the members of these groups belong to other groups as well. Unlike the followers of the Neo-catechumenate where most only participate in that community, those involved in the Charismatic Renewal are also involved in the Christian base communities or in bible study groups. Therefore trying to quantify how members of each group self-identified was more difficult. The study estimates that 61% of those involved in the Charismatic Renewal chose to identify as Latino/Hispanic, 7% selected a combined identity and 32% chose to identify on the basis of national origin.

The first observation that would be made when comparing the breakdown in self-identification between the Neo-catechumenate and Charismatic Renewal groups would be that while most of the former chose combined identities, the majority of the latter preferred pan-ethnicity. I believe that this difference can be explained at least in part by each group's relationship to the parish and community, in general. It is much easier for someone in the Charismatic Renewal, to see him/herself as part of a larger Latino/Hispanic community. As Rosa, a leader within the group described, members are taught that “in the spiritual environment nationalities are eliminated....we enter a reality in which we are in agreement. We try to accept each other as we are. [Thus] the spiritual

dimension affects the social dimension; they both work together.” For Rosa the lessons of the Charismatic Renewal are not to be applied solely to the members of the group, they also are relevant for the larger community. The followers of the Neo-catechumenate, on the other hand, are by their nature exclusionary. As a result, their image of community is much smaller. These participants may be learning similar lessons, but the scope of their applicability may be much more limited.

What I find most revealing about the results for SJB is that in all of the groups national origin still plays a prominent role. Whether it is as part of a multiple or complimentary identity or whether it is selected on its own, nationality is present at SJB. While the brotherhoods may not hold a privileged position within the church, the leadership of SJB understands that symbols of nationality draws new members, as well as non-active parishioners to the church. Moreover, not only is the religious leadership aware of it, so are parishioners. Leo poignantly described the environment stating, “different national groups are represented in the non-national groups, but each celebrates its own traditions. This has positive and negative repercussions. The focus should be Christ, but the Church cannot disengage from the individual cultures” (personal interview, 2000). Therefore, from a theological standpoint the leadership may not favor fostering nationality, but it recognizes the practicality and the advantages of allowing expressions of national sentiment. As a result, it may be more practical to navigate cautiously amongst the popular faith groups whose symbols are deeply embedded in nationality and the lived faith groups that separate Christianity from nationality or pan-ethnicity.

One may ask, then, what are the implications of this very complex environment for this study? At SJB, we did not find statistical support for H<sub>1</sub>. Yet, we did find ample qualitative evidence of that active religious participation contributed to building communities among parishioners of different nationalities. Moreover, interviews also revealed that the communities built in lay groups were very different to the kind they could find at work, in their neighborhoods or in other types of social environments. Repeatedly, individuals mentioned that they did have friends at work of other nationalities, but that they had not built close relationships with those individuals, like the ones they had established in church. It is precisely that kind of sense of community that hypothesis # 1 referred to. As a result, the qualitative data do support the last hypothesis.

The findings in the SJB case are most interesting for H<sub>2</sub>. St. John the Baptist has a North American pastor, whose responsibilities really do not permit him to be involved in the daily activities of the lay groups. In addition, he speaks of unity, but has never undertaken a proactive role in fostering Latino/Hispanic community. The priests who have more day-to-day contact with the lay groups have both been Colombian. Their own experiences as immigrants affect their vision for these communities. As a result, like in the case of El Buen Pastor, we find that ideology plays an important role in determining how identity will be constructed with the religious community. Unlike El Buen Pastor, however, the nationality of the leadership also appears to be an important factor. At SJB, the Latin American leadership did not ascribe to the existence of a true Latino/Hispanic identity. It is the combined effect of an indifference towards the notion of pan-ethnicity and a pragmatic attitude towards cultural maintenance that has left the door open for

expressions of national sentiment to persist at both the level of lay groups and especially at the parish level.

### **Our Lady of Lourdes (OLOL)**

Although Our Lady of Lourdes Church was not significant in the secondary statistical analysis, it is useful to describe some of its internal dynamics since it serves as relevant background when comparing all of the results. Father Hena founded OLOL in 1882. Like SJB, it has been an immigrant church throughout its history. In the 1960s the composition of the parish began to change as Latin American immigrants begin to challenges the numerical dominance of European immigrants. During this time, the parish, recognized the demographic changes that were occurring, not only at OLOL, but also in the city of Paterson, and thus hired Hispanic clergy to serve this growing population.

Our Lady of Lourdes also differentiates itself from the other research sites because since 1977, the Capuchin-Franciscan order of the New Jersey Province has administered the parish and its school. This has meant that for more than 30 years a group of mostly young men with a conviction for service and charity have made the parish their home. During the years that the friars of the Capuchin-Franciscan order were not living in the parish, orders of religious women have occupied the convent and managed the school. This has made OLOL a true community church, where the religious men and women who have lived their have always made an effort to open the doors of this parish to the community it calls home.

During my first visit to Paterson in 1997, Father Peter Napoli, a Capuchin-Franciscan, was the pastor and he had been living alone, without members from his order for a number of years. Father Napoli led the church at a time when religious

brotherhoods were at their peak, in terms of their visibility and influence in the city of Paterson. Yet, he was instrumental in changing the dynamic of the brotherhood of El Señor de los Milagros at OLOL. Whereas the brother had previously enjoyed substantial autonomy, Father Napoli eliminated much of their autonomy and attempted to establish them as other lay groups in the parish. This move was extremely significant because it broke the traditional relationship between the Church and religious brotherhoods and it was seen as a severe blow by many of the members.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, some non-Peruvian parishioners viewed it as simply a continuation of a pattern in which Peruvians were able to garner all of Father Napoli's attention and relegate other national origin groups to secondary status (personal interviews, 2000).

This dynamic was not evident during my first visit because at that time my research focused on Peruvians. However, participant observations in the *Cursillo* the *Cristiandad* (a lay group with a multi-Hispanic membership) for example did not initially reveal internal resentment within the group. In fact, what was apparent was Father Napoli's insistence upon teaching members of different nationalities to live together as Latino/Hispanic Christians and set aside their cultural and national differences. What the second research visit exposed is that this image was a veneer that concealed a more complex interchange among the different national origin groups.

In 1999, Father Thomas Crangle inherited this challenge when he became pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes. Father Tom brought with him a community of Capuchin-Franciscans and they all embarked on a mission to structurally and spiritually revitalize the parish. Father Tom spoke very little Spanish and therefore brought with him Father Bob Yurgel, who took on the role of pastor of the Hispanic community. The transition

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<sup>10</sup>For a complete discussion see, Baía, "Rethinking Transnationalism," 1999.

from Father Napoli to Father Tom was not an easy one. Father Napoli was a rather conservative man and had transplanted those attitudes to the parish. Father Tom was in every aspect the opposite of Father Napoli and the simple fact that he smoked openly outside of church became an issue of contention among parishioners. Father Napoli, in part because he ministered alone, was quite secretive about church monetary and administrative affairs. Father Tom opened everything up to discussion; parish debt and weekly collections, the need for remodeling and the community's responsibility in the effort, the need to reactivate the defunct parish council.

All this "openness" along with the priests walking around in shorts without their habits brought about extreme reactions. While some loved the image of the clergy as people, like themselves, others viewed it as disrespectful to the institution. Some appreciated the access they now had to internal parish information, but felt burdened by the new responsibilities that access demanded. Most importantly for this study, those who had been privileged under the previous system, now felt snubbed by the more inclusive perspective of the leadership.

By the Spring of 2000, those who had been prominent lay leaders in 1997 (mostly male members of the brother of El Señor de los Milagros) were barely visible. A new leadership had emerged, which was more representative of the gender and national composition of the Church. Another major shift was that where Father Napoli was clear in this view that the community had to break down the barriers of nationality and embrace pan-ethnicity, Father Tom and Father Bob were struggling with the challenge. Father Bob recognized the need foster a sense of community amongst the parishioners, but acknowledges that they separate themselves by nationality. He believes "in treating

the community in national terms because they have different needs and patriotism is very important to them.”

Father Tom sees the value in fostering community amongst the parishioners. He agrees that the Church has an important role in that process, particularly because it has implications for role that Latinos/Hispanics should play in the social, economic and political life of the city. Yet, he also feels strongly that this takes time and that before that can be accomplished all of the national origin groups have to feel represented within the parish. He used the example of the growing Salvadoran and Costa Rican population, which have never been able to celebrate the feast of their patron saint, unlike Peruvians and Dominicans. As a result of the efforts of Father Tom and Father Bob, both groups celebrated a joint feast for the first time in 2000.

The resulting dynamic is that the fervor that Father Napoli expressed for pan-ethnicity no longer permeated the parish. Instead, there was a sense that the leadership was accepting of what the parishioners wanted and that all groups had equal access to space, visibility and roles of authority. Yet, that access was granted only to those groups that actively sought it. Both priests adamantly believed in the idea that “it has to come from the people.” Within this more dynamic context, national identity was beginning to resurface, in particular, those that had not been previously noticed.

The re-emergence of national identity becomes evident in the survey results. Pan-ethnicity was the most preferred category for self-identification garnering more than 50%. Yet, approximately 30% of the respondents chose national identity. This percentage was the highest for the entire sample. This level of preference for national identity was not expected for this research site, particularly given what previous research



had revealed. There are a few possible explanations for these findings. First, since the first visit research project at OLOL focus on Peruvians, it is possible that these sentiments were present among the other groups. Nonetheless, during the first project extensive participant observation was carried out of the different lay groups. Thus, while the sentiments may have been present, they were not expressed openly.

Second, perhaps the influx of new national origin groups to the parish, such as Costa Ricans and Salvadorans, has re-introduced national identity into parish dynamics. Peruvians, Dominicans and Puerto Ricans are the established and historical Latino/Hispanic groups at Our Lady of Lourdes. The fact that these national origin groups have lived in the city for many years means that they are more likely to have incorporated themselves somewhat to US society and thus would be more likely to use a pan-ethnic term. Newer arrivals, like Salvadorans and Costa Ricans, have are only beginning their incorporation process and their ties to home are bound to be stronger. As a result, it is possible that their entry into the community has brought with it a strong national identity that may be reinvigorating other more dormant nationalities.

Finally, it is probable that the ideology of the leadership is playing a role as it has in the other research sites. In the OLOL case, we first had a long-time pastor who strongly favored pan-ethnicity. Succeeding that pastor came two individuals' whose vision was not nearly as concrete. The transition resulted in enormous changes, including a renewed openness in all aspects of the parish. That openness provided the room for national origin to emerge.

### **Conclusion**

The statistical analysis did not demonstrate that religious participation (active or otherwise) affected self-identification. Yet, the qualitative data suggest that there is a

link between these two variables. What can be drawn from this disparity is that perhaps active religious involvement is not the most important variable, but instead it is a variable that functions in conjunction with other variables. The first analysis demonstrated that holding other variables constant, length of stay in the US and income had an effect that was statistically significant. In the second analysis, where the dependent variable was changed to pan-ethnicity and nationality, we found that the attitudes of the respondents on certain issues and two of the research sites were statistically significant. We know that pan-ethnicity is emerging in the city of Paterson not only because of the high preference for pan-ethnicity in the three churches, but more importantly, because of the even higher support for pan-ethnicity outside of the three research sites. The more important finding of this study is that while churches are providing a setting in which pan-ethnicity can grow, the internal dynamics of each religious community are determining how pan-ethnicity and nationality are negotiated. While perhaps prior to conducting the study it was expected that the churches would be at the center of the emergence of pan-ethnicity, the findings reveal that the context is much more complex, because churches are also providing a space where expressions of national origin can be maintained.

## CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION

### **The Emergence of the Latino/Hispanic Identity**

The primary aim of this study was to examine whether active religious involvement had an effect on the emergence of a pan-Latino identity within the context of a multi-Hispanic urban environment, like Paterson, New Jersey. Inherent in this statement, is the notion that such a Latino/Hispanic identity exists. Although, admittedly, I expected to find expressions of a Latino/Hispanic identity, part of my rationale for carrying out this study was to provide evidence of a phenomenon that many have discounted, but few have studied empirically. Perhaps the most surprising and one of the most important findings of the entire project was the overwhelming preference of pan-ethnicity amongst the Comparison Group. While I expected to find support for a pan-Latino identity in the religious communities, the fact that 90% of a randomly selected sample chose to self-identify on the basis of a pan-ethnic term was completely unforeseen.

Why would the overwhelming preference for pan-ethnicity amongst the Comparison Group be so significant? In Chapter 1, I discussed that the importance of this research could be understood from a pragmatic, normative and theoretical approach. First, there is the question of what a pan-Latino identity means for Latino/Hispanic voting in the US, particularly given this population's concentration in states with large numbers of electoral votes? Recent electoral evidence at the both the local and national level indicates that a Latino/Hispanic voting bloc has not emerged and may never do so. Many Latinos/Hispanics across the country appear to be testing the waters of the political

environment without necessarily vowing loyalty to any one party. In addition, being a Latino/Hispanic candidate does not guarantee the Latino/Hispanic vote as Lieutenant Governor Cruz Bustamante's loss of the California governorship has shown. However, the fact that more and more politicians have seen it necessary to openly court Latinos/Hispanics indicates that political campaigners understand the if only for numerical reasons, Latinos/Hispanics are not a population that should be ignored. Thus, support for a Latino/Hispanic identity means that there is an emerging foundation from which to work. Those that have argued in the past that there is no point in paying attention to Latinos/Hispanics because they are too divided need to be more careful in their assessment. While divisions clearly exist, there is potential for developing the commonalities that do exist and it is up to the leadership, both at the national and grassroots levels, to decipher how they can best utilize them.

From the normative perspective, the support for pan-ethnicity provides evidence to counteract those who have argued that immigrants have no interest in becoming part of the host country. Accepting, at least in part, that you are a member of a larger group that is tied to the context of your host society is a step in the acculturation process. This study has and will continue to argue that adoption of a pan-ethnic term does not indicate a rejection of national identities. Yet, adopting a pan-Latino identity is an acknowledgement of having a place in this society, in addition to the one you left behind. Therefore, the support for pan-ethnicity should be understood as a sign of embracing and adopting the host country on the part of the immigrant.

Examining the theoretical perspective, this study found no clear evidence of Latino/Hispanic identity being used for instrumental purposes, unlike Padilla's 1985

study. Interviews suggested that Latino/Hispanic identity was not an expression based solely based on rational calculations of self-interest. Instead pan-Latino identity appears to be a shared sense of cultural, linguistic and moral characteristics. Yet, I am careful not to describe this emerging identity as an "imagined community." Findings indicated that 16.0% of all respondents wrote in combined or multiple identities. This result indicates a very purposeful expression on the part of respondents of the value they ascribe to retaining a menu of identities. In addition, as has been mentioned before, even for those who use a pan-ethnic term, usage does not indicate a rejection of national identities. As some of the responses to the attitudinal questions revealed some of those self-identifying as Latino or Hispanic are unwilling to replace nationality with a much broader conceptualization of the Latino/Hispanic self.

I theorize that the reason why even those who identify pan-ethnically still cling to nationality is because the two options are not seen as mutually exclusive. In other immigrant groups in the US, this idea was expressed via hyphenation, i.e., Irish-American, African-American. Latinos/Hispanics are generally still hesitant to adopt the term "American." This is partly due to the recent nature of their immigration to this country. In addition, adopting the term "American" may be rejected as a statement against the perceived and/or true harms committed on the part of the US to Latin Americans here or in their countries of origin. Therefore, the terms "Latino" and "Hispanic" are safe alternatives to hyphenated labels and they allow these individuals to jointly embrace their adopted and original homes. In essence, it is much easier for an immigrant to say, "I am Latino" (which in his or her mind in no way rejects his/her

Peruvian nationality, precisely because there is no “Latino” or “Hispanic” nation-state), than it would be for that same person to say I am “Peruvian-American.”

Currently, it appears that the constructivist model best explains the case of Latino/Hispanic identity because it allows for an ongoing process of reconstruction. Latino/Hispanic identity can be described as an umbrella term, whose vagueness is able to capture the definitions assigned to it at different times. It is possible for Latino/Hispanic identity to be an instrumental identity if it became politicized and was used as an expression of calculated self-interest. There is currently no evidence of this usage of pan-Latino identity. The only decision approximating a calculation that individuals appear to participating in is the decision not to reject national identities even when adopting a pan-ethnic term. That determination does not offer support for using the instrumentalist model since there is no apparent benefit attached to selecting Latino/Hispanic identity. Unlike Padilla’s case, individuals here perceive no material advantage to choosing pan-ethnicity; instead, the choice may simply be the one that more accurately described the reality they currently faced.

Finally, it is important to address the issue of where this study fits into to existing research on self-identification amongst Latinos/Hispanics. The LNPS discussed in Chapter 2 did not report support for pan-ethnic identification. However, later analysis of the same data by Michael Jones Correa and David Leal (1996) uncovered evidence of pan-ethnicity when results were examined allowing for multiple or combined identities. A recent national survey conducted by the Pew Institute (2002) again suggests that there is little support for a pan-Latino identity amongst Latinos/Hispanics. Thus, where does this leave the findings of this study?

I believe that various factors are contributing to the discrepancy in the findings of this local project and the national ones. First, survey research is not the best methodology available for understanding identity. Clearly it provides a researcher the opportunity to quickly gauge the opinions of a large sample of people on numerous issues, which is extremely beneficial when trying to observe patterns. The national studies have found patterns, which apparently do not support pan-ethnicity, but without examining the contexts in which those patterns exist (local level) the findings remain broad patterns with little meaning. The survey research in Paterson provided evidence of self-identification on the basis of pan-ethnicity, but it was the qualitative work that enabled me to understand the complexity of how identities are negotiated by immigrants every day. Therefore, I encourage more scholarly on this topic that not only examines the broad patterns, but also investigates the stories behind the patterns.

Second, it is likely that the findings in Paterson, New Jersey do not follow the apparent national patterns because Paterson has some unique characteristics. Paterson was selected, at least in part, because it was different to other localities with large Latino/Hispanic populations. Paterson's Latinos/Hispanics compete amongst each other and with other groups (i.e., African Americans, Middle Easterners) for economic, political, social and cultural space. The ongoing flow of new immigrants maintains employment competition high, particularly for the lowest paying service and manufacturing jobs that remain. Within this context tensions are high amongst Latinos/Hispanics and African Americans as each group blames the other for the city's economic and political challenges.

I theorize that the tensions between African Americans and Latinos/Hispanics in Paterson have resulted in confrontational attitude (an "us against them"), which in turn has contributed to the preference for pan-ethnicity. Latinos/Hispanics are aware that even though they are in the majority, their majority status has not translated into tangible political or economic benefits. Their inability to gain the highest political offices is perhaps the biggest obstacle to those goals. Therefore, although, until recently, Latinos/Hispanics had not been able to unite to utilize their numbers politically, it is possible that ascribing to pan-ethnicity is almost a defense mechanism to disassociate themselves from those whom they identify as part of the problem. Clearly these are conjectures that can only be confirmed with further study. Yet, if the context in Paterson is different to the national patterns, then it is important to understand why. Moreover, although Paterson may be unique particularly relative to a city like Los Angeles, more cities around the country may soon resemble Paterson, making further research even more necessary.

### **Factors affecting Pan-ethnicity**

As was discussed in Chapter 6, the statistical tests do not concur with the findings of the interviews or participant observation. The variables that were found to have a significant effect on the dependent variable (pan-ethnic identification) were the Comparison Group, Annual Household Income of \$65,000 or above, and Length of Stay in the US of 20 years or above.

Part of the reason why the Comparison Group was found to have a significant relationship is due to the method used in collecting the data. This has already been discussed. While acknowledging the limitations of the sample, it must also be said that the purpose of including a Comparison Group was to compare the reality outside of the



churches with what was expected inside the churches. Clearly that purpose was met. Although the result was not expected, it serves to bring insight to the complexity of the topic and the need for continued research both at the national and local levels. Moreover, the finding highlights how important churches really are. I expected the churches to be at the forefront of the community's opinion. What I did not expect was that churches would provide the settings where national identity would be nurtured and protected.

Income and Length of Stay are two variables included in the tests because of their apparent relationship to identity construction. The findings associated with these two variables were not surprises. It is to be expected that as income increases, immigrants would be less likely to choose pan-ethnicity. Attaining a higher socio-economic status broadens individual's choices. In other words, these individuals can actively select to belong or reject membership in a minority category because their income allows them to.

It is also possible that individuals at the higher income categories are asserting nationality instead of rejecting pan-ethnicity. Selecting nationality may simply be a reaction to reaping the benefits of the "American Dream." The freedoms and privileges afforded by their socio-economic status mean that they can become symbols to other members of their national origin group that they have made it. In this sense a preference for nationality or a combined identity is a matter of displaying one's pride for one's hard work and the position attained in society.

The results for Length of Stay confirm that the longer immigrants live in the US, the more likely they are to construct permanent ties to this country. Even when individuals fit the transnational model, of bridging two or more societies at once, immigrants do build horizontal linkages in their host society. Moreover, these linkages

are reinforced by subsequent generations, whose ties to the home country decrease with time. What was most interesting about these results is that the base category for the analysis was those immigrants indicating they had lived in the US “all their lives.”

Individuals who indicating living in the US 20 years or more were more likely to identify pan-ethnically than those individuals living in the US “all their lives.” As was mentioned in Chapters 4 and 6 a large percentage of the respondents selecting “all my life” were Puerto Ricans either born in the continental US or having arrived in the US at a very young age. I believe the preference for national identity amongst this group is a result of a heightened sense of nationality produced by the political ramifications of a national origin, which does not have a corresponding citizenship. In other words, Puerto Ricans experience a hyper-nationality because of their nation’s complicated and often uneasy pseudo colonial relationship to the US. Furthermore, this hyper-nationality is fueled by the first hand experience of living as a minority in the US. While this experience is in no way limited to Puerto Ricans or Chicanos, it can be argued that their longer history in the US has given these groups unique insights into minority life.

### **Hypothesis # 1: Active Religious Involvement**

No statistically significant relationship was found between active religious involvement and pan-ethnic identification. The quantitative data nullified hypothesis #1. However, substantial qualitative evidence supports the existence of a relationship between the two variables. Chapter 5 documents the numerous times that individuals actively participating in lay groups linked their decision to identify pan-ethnically with their participation in religious groups. In particular, respondents described how the close relationships that lay groups have enabled them to build with individuals of other nationalities have been the main factor in their decision to reflect upon their own identity

and what that means to them. While statistical analysis cannot validate these results, it also cannot negate their authenticity.

Scholarly research in the social sciences has rightfully embraced empiricism due in part to criticism from the natural sciences that social scientific research was not “scientific” enough. This has resulted in works that strive to utilize the numerous methodologies available to social scientists to present a more accurate and replicable reality of the world we study. I strongly believe in the need for empiricism and that is why various research methodologies were employed in this study. However, as was mentioned above, identity construction is a topic that cannot be studied without the use of qualitative methods.

Logistical regression enabled me to isolate the variables that were most important in the analysis, but it cannot inform us as to the meaning those variables have for respondents. The in-depth interviews and participant observation provided the richness necessary to understand the complexities of the patterns observed in the statistical analysis. Therefore, two things can be drawn from the nullification of the hypothesis one. First, it highlights how fundamental religion and congregations are to the study of identity. Second, it provides us with a rationale for why scholars must incorporate different methodologies into their work. Clearly this experience demonstrates that relying solely on one method may give one results that are precise, but do not accurately describe the full reality of the phenomenon one aims to understand.

If we accept that congregations and religious participation active religious involvement has a role to play in the construction of identity, then, what does this study tell us about that role? What we learn is that churches provide a setting in which pan-

ethnicity can grow, but the way in which pan-ethnicity and nationality are negotiated is determined by the internal dynamics of each religious community. The qualitative data support the notion that the relationships nurtured in lay groups contribute to immigrants' sense of belonging to a larger multi-national Latino/Hispanic community. Yet, factors like the ideology of the pastor, his contact with the congregation, the changing demographics of the parish, etc, all partly determine the ways in which pan-ethnicity and nationalities co-exist.

One of the initial assumptions of the study was that religious communities were at the forefront of the emergence of a pan-ethnic identity amongst Latinos/Hispanics in Paterson. In part, this assumption was supported by the overwhelming preference for pan-ethnicity in all of the churches. Yet what was most surprising was that even though within the religious communities there was an effort to teach unity amongst Latinos/Hispanics, there was also a conscious attempt at celebrating cultural and religious (in the case of Catholics) expressions of nationality. This meant that in different ways the churches were encouraging pan-ethnicity, but never as an alternative to national identity. Further, national identity found a protected space in all of the congregations and it is that context that enables and may even foster an on-going negotiation between pan-ethnicity and national origin.

The Hispanic Day festivities at El Buen Pastor are a good example of this negotiation. Everyone who was present that day was Latino/Hispanic (even if only by honorary membership), but each national origin group was encouraged to display symbols of nationality. These symbols were used to teach one national origin group about another. Yet, the overarching theme of the day was being Latino/Hispanic.

Therefore, being Latino/Hispanic that day in no way conflicted with being Guatemalan and in fact being Guatemalan means that on this day you were Latino/Hispanic as well.

For some, this is an exercise in which they only participate once a year, yet the message that is presented is clear; there is room for both pan-ethnicity and nationality within the context of the religious community. From an analytical perspective, whether one may become more salient at a particular period of time cannot be predicted broadly because changes occur as a direct response to the factors mentioned above. Thus, while I can say with certainty that religious communities are vital to understanding identity construction within immigrant communities, the exact role that each community plays is specific to the complexities of each.

### **Hypothesis # 2: The Role of the Pastor's Nationality and Ideology**

Findings related to hypothesis 2 were mixed. Results show that the ideology of the pastor is important in the development of a pan-ethnic identity and how it is managed relative to national identities, but the same cannot be said about the nationality of the pastor. It was theorized that North American pastors would be more likely to encourage pan-ethnicity and than Latin American pastors. Evidence of this was found in the case of the St. John the Baptist, where the Colombian priest is incredulous about the existence of a Latino/Hispanic identity, in contrast to the North American pastor. However, the North American pastor has had neither the time nor the will to engage in a proactive role of fostering pan-ethnicity. The result is a community in which expressions of nationality are extremely evident and where pan-ethnic unity is not a topic that is prioritized by the clergy or lay leadership.

Contrary to my original assumption, the Chilean pastor of El Buen Pastor has taken a much more proactive role in promoting pan-ethnicity. It is his vision of himself as not

only a teacher of Christian values, but of survival skills for new immigrants that best explains the context of El Buen Pastor. Here the topic of pan-ethnic unity is a major part of weekly sermons. Furthermore, the establishment of "Hispanic Day" was a conscious step to encourage the congregation to break-down the barriers that nationalities often erect.

At Our Lady of Lourdes, it is again the ideology of the pastor, which appears to be most important. During my first visit to Paterson, the church was lead by a North American pastor with an interventionist and almost paternalistic vision of the congregation. During the second research visit, the pastor was again a North American, but one with a very hands-off approach to leadership. Fr. Napoli truly saw himself as a shepherd leading the flock. This meant that his teachings had to promote unity and thus the notion of a Latino/Hispanic identity. Fr. Crangle believes unity is important, but only if it comes from the people. In his view it should not be imposed. Therefore, while in the 1990s the congregation often was encouraged to embrace pan-ethnicity, in the new millennium national identities have found renewed space from which to emerge.

### **Multiple/Combined Identities**

The discussion above has already devoted a substantial amount of time to the importance of acknowledging multiple or combined identities. The survey results demonstrate that for some this matter was so critical that they went out of their way to indicate this preference, even when the survey did not provide this category as a choice. Moreover, the discussion has also made clear that even for those individuals who selected pan-ethnicity, the choice was not made as a rejection of national identity. What this evidence indicates is that the way in which contemporary scholarship thinks about Latino/Hispanic identity must be reconsidered. Thus far, most scholarly works on the

topic have described pan-ethnicity as a substitute for national identities. Perhaps it is time that scholarship considers that what has been defined as a replacement identity is in fact inherently a multiple, combined or layered identity. The findings here suggest this to be the case. If indeed it is, then, the way in which we construct our surveys and the questions we ask during interviews must be changed. More importantly the way we think theoretically about Latino/Hispanic identity demands that we broaden our scope of scholarly vision and re-evaluate the preconceptions we carry with us in our objective minds.

APPENDIX A  
ADDITIONAL TABLES

Table A-1: Religious Affiliation of Members of the Comparison Group

| Religious Affiliation Categories    | Comparison Group |         |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|---------|
|                                     | Number of Cases  | Percent |
| Catholic                            | 71               | 71.7    |
| Traditional Protestant <sup>a</sup> | 2                | 2.0     |
| Evangelical                         | 6                | 6.1     |
| Pentecostal                         | 7                | 7.1     |
| Asian Religions                     | 1                | 1.0     |
| Other                               | 3                | 3.0     |
| No Religion                         | 9                | 9.1     |

<sup>a</sup>Respondents were asked to write-in their religious affiliation and responses were later coded. Traditional Protestants include Episcopalians, Lutherans, Calvinists, Christian Reformed, Baptists and individuals who used the term "Protestant."

Table A-2: Religious Involvement of Members of the Comparison Group

| Religious Involvement                       | Comparison Group |         |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------|---------|
|                                             | Number of Cases  | Percent |
| Doesn't attend religious services regularly | 29               | 29.3    |
| Attends religious services regularly        | 70               | 70.7    |
| Doesn't participate in religious groups     | 87               | 87.9    |
| Actively participates in religious groups   | 11.1             | 11.1    |
| Has participated in religious groups        | 1                | 1.0     |

Table A-3: Age and Length of Stay in the US

| Age Categories | Length of Stay |          |           |         |             |
|----------------|----------------|----------|-----------|---------|-------------|
|                | 0 – 1yrs       | 2-10 yrs | 11-20 yrs | 20+ yrs | All my life |
| 18–29          | 11.1%          | 46.7%    | 17.8%     | 8.9%    | 15.6%       |
| 30–44          | 5.9%           | 35.6%    | 27.7%     | 20.8%   | 9.9%        |
| 45–64          | 0%             | 23.9%    | 23.9%     | 50.7%   | 1.5%        |
| 65+            | 0%             | 33.9%    | 26.1%     | 39.1%   | 4.3%        |



Table A-4: Length of Stay in Selected Communities in Paterson, NJ

|                  | Length of Stay |          |           |         |             |
|------------------|----------------|----------|-----------|---------|-------------|
|                  | < 1 yr         | 2–10 yrs | 11–20 yrs | 20+ yrs | All my Life |
| Community 1      | 3.2%           | 31.7%    | 27.0%     | 33.3%   | 4.8%        |
| Community 2      | 3.0%           | 29.9%    | 19.4%     | 37.3%   | 10.4%       |
| Community 3      | 15.4%          | 38.5%    | 23.1%     | 23.1%   | 0           |
| Comparison Group | 5.1%           | 35.4%    | 27.3%     | 23.2%   | 9.1%        |

Table A-5: Migration Status in Selected Communities in Paterson, NJ

|                  | Migration Status |                |       |
|------------------|------------------|----------------|-------|
|                  | US Citizen       | Legal Resident | Other |
| Community 1      | 60.7%            | 27.9%          | 11.5% |
| Community 2      | 59.7%            | 32.8%          | 7.5%  |
| Community 3      | 38.5%            | 38.5%          | 23.1% |
| Comparison Group | 41.4%            | 57.6%          | 1.0%  |
| Total            | 51.3%            | 42.1%          | 6.7%  |
| N = 240          |                  |                |       |

Table A-6: Length of Stay and Migration Status

| Length of Stay | Migration Status |                |       |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|-------|
|                | US Citizen       | Legal Resident | Other |
| < 1 yr.        | 33.3%            | 44.4%          | 22.2% |
| 2–10 yrs.      | 12.7%            | 70.9%          | 16.5% |
| 11–20 yrs.     | 49.2%            | 50.8%          | 0     |
| 20+ yrs.       | 84.7%            | 15.3%          | 0     |
| All My Life    | 100%             | 0              | 0     |

Table A-7: Logistic Regression – Pan-ethnic Identification and Important Variables<sup>a</sup> (All)

| Step | -2 Log Likelihood | Cox and Snell R Square | Nagelkerke R Square |
|------|-------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1    | 214.858           | .307                   | .426                |

<sup>a</sup>Pan-ethnic identification in this analysis includes individuals who self-identified as “Hispanic,” “Latino” or a combination of both terms.

## Variables in the Equation

|                                                                                     | B      | S.E.  | Wald   | Df | Sig. | Exp(B) |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-------|--------|----|------|--------|
| Comparison Group                                                                    | 2.313  | .723  | 10.231 | 1  | .001 | 10.105 |
| Gender                                                                              | -.195  | .384  | .259   | 1  | .611 | .823   |
| Our Lady of Lourdes                                                                 | .607   | .486  | 1.557  | 1  | .212 | 1.835  |
| El Buen Pastor                                                                      | 1.224  | .696  | 3.090  | 1  | .079 | 3.401  |
| Educational Attainment – Primary School                                             | -1.186 | .567  | 4.371  | 1  | .037 | .306   |
| Educational Attainment – Secondary School                                           | -.420  | .415  | 1.027  | 1  | .311 | .657   |
| Household Income - \$20,000 or less                                                 | .611   | .501  | 1.485  | 1  | .223 | 1.843  |
| Household Income - \$20,001 – 45,000                                                | .202   | .504  | .160   | 1  | .689 | 1.223  |
| Household Income - \$65,000 or more                                                 | -1.740 | .732  | 5.651  | 1  | .017 | .176   |
| US Citizen                                                                          | -.282  | .726  | .151   | 1  | .698 | .754   |
| Legal Resident Alien                                                                | -.618  | .681  | .824   | 1  | .364 | .539   |
| Attitudinal Question - All Latinos/Hispanics share a common culture (R1 = agree)    | -.118  | .565  | .043   | 1  | .835 | .889   |
| Attitudinal Question – All Latinos/Hispanics share a common culture (R3 = disagree) | -.038  | .901  | .002   | 1  | .967 | .963   |
| Attitudinal Question - Relationship b/w religious participation and identity (R1)   | 1.117  | .561  | 3.964  | 1  | .046 | 3.055  |
| Attitudinal Question - Relationship b/w religious participation and identity (R3)   | .313   | .580  | .291   | 1  | .590 | 1.367  |
| Length of Stay in the US – 1 year or less                                           | -.406  | 1.028 | .156   | 1  | .693 | .666   |
| Length of Stay in the US – 2–10 years                                               | 1.107  | .770  | 2.066  | 1  | .151 | 3.024  |
| Length of Stay in the US – 11–20 yrs.                                               | 1.574  | .738  | 4.547  | 1  | .033 | 4.825  |
| Length of Stay in the US – 20+                                                      | 1.917  | .708  | 7.324  | 1  | .007 | 6.797  |

|                                                                                                                                   | B      | S.E.  | Wald  | Df | Sig. | Exp(B) |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-------|-------|----|------|--------|
| Attitudinal Question – Relationship between religious participation and an increase in friend of other nationalities (R1)         | -.710  | .533  | 1.778 | 1  | .182 | .491   |
| Attitudinal Question – Relationship between religious participation and an increase in friends of other nationalities(R3)         | -.198  | .745  | .070  | 1  | .791 | .821   |
| Attitudinal Question – Relationship between religious participation and a decline in prejudice about other Latinos/Hispanics (R1) | .392   | .465  | .710  | 1  | .399 | 1.479  |
| Attitudinal Question – Relationship between religious participation and a decline in prejudice about other Latinos/Hispanics (R3) | 1.067  | .568  | 3.522 | 1  | .061 | 2.906  |
| Attitudinal Question – Pastors should promote unity amongst the Latino/Hispanic community (R1)                                    | -1.106 | .669  | 2.735 | 1  | .098 | .331   |
| Attitudinal Question – Pastors should promote unity amongst the Latino/Hispanic community (R3)                                    | -.856  | .977  | .768  | 1  | .381 | .425   |
| Dummy Variable indicating attendance at a weekly religious service                                                                | -.424  | .545  | .605  | 1  | .437 | .654   |
| Constant                                                                                                                          | -.042  | 1.188 | .001  | 1  | .972 | .959   |

Table A-8: Logistic Regression: Pan-ethnicity and Nationality and Important Variables (All)

| Step | -2 Log Likelihood | Cox & Snell R Square | Nagelkerke R Square |
|------|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1    | 137.182           | .261                 | .446                |

## Variables in the Equation

|                                                                                   | B      | S.E.    | Wald  | Df | Sig. | Exp(B)    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|---------|-------|----|------|-----------|
| Attitudinal Question – Right to National Festivities (R1)                         | .645   | .670    | .925  | 1  | .336 | 1.905     |
| Attitudinal Question – Right to National Festivities (R3)                         | 1.786  | .870    | 4.220 | 1  | .040 | 5.968     |
| Attitudinal Question – All Latinos/Hispanics share a common culture (R1)          | .103   | .685    | .022  | 1  | .881 | 1.108     |
| Attitudinal Question – All Latinos/Hispanics share a common culture (R2)          | 1.844  | .894    | 4.258 | 1  | .039 | 6.324     |
| Comparison Group                                                                  | -7.897 | 15.980  | .244  | 1  | .621 | .000      |
| St. John the Baptist                                                              | 1.047  | .543    | 3.717 | 1  | .054 | 2.850     |
| El Buen Pastor                                                                    | 1.166  | .777    | 2.255 | 1  | .133 | 3.211     |
| Household Income - \$20,000 or less                                               | -.903  | .568    | 2.527 | 1  | .112 | .405      |
| Household Income - \$20,001 – 45,000                                              | -1.043 | .575    | 3.291 | 1  | .070 | .352      |
| Household Income - \$65,000 or more                                               | -.424  | .781    | .294  | 1  | .587 | .655      |
| Occupation = Factory                                                              | 11.095 | 164.263 | .005  | 1  | .946 | 65873.302 |
| Occupation = Professional                                                         | .847   | .536    | 2.499 | 1  | .114 | 2.332     |
| Occupation = Self Employed                                                        | .385   | 1.266   | .093  | 1  | .761 | 1.470     |
| Attitudinal Question - Relationship b/w religious participation and identity (R1) | -1.193 | .623    | 3.665 | 1  | .056 | .303      |
| Attitudinal Question - Relationship b/w religious participation and identity (R3) | -.297  | .556    | .286  | 1  | .593 | .743      |
| Dummy Variable indicating Active Religious Involvement                            | .305   | .712    | .184  | 1  | .668 | 1.356     |
| Constant                                                                          | -1.911 | .839    | 5.193 | 1  | .023 | .148      |

Table A-9: Self-Identification-3 Categories and "All Latinos share cultural traits."

| Self-Identification – 3 Categories | "All Latin American living in the US, without regard to national origin, share cultural characteristics that unite them as a Hispanic or Latino community." |            |          |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------|
|                                    | Agree                                                                                                                                                       | No Opinion | Disagree |
| Nationality                        | 35                                                                                                                                                          | 1          | 3        |
| Nationality and Pan-ethnicity      | 27                                                                                                                                                          | 5          | 1        |
| Pan-ethnicity                      | 123                                                                                                                                                         | 6          | 13       |
| N = 214                            | 185                                                                                                                                                         | 12         | 17       |

Table A-10: Self-Identification – 3 Categories and "Participating in lay groups has changed the way I identify myself"

| Self-Identification – 3 Categories | "Participating in lay groups has changed the way I identify myself." |            |          |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------|
|                                    | Agree                                                                | No Opinion | Disagree |
| Nationality                        | 10                                                                   | 8          | 9        |
| Nationality and Pan-ethnicity      | 6                                                                    | 3          | 6        |
| Pan-ethnicity                      | 23                                                                   | 4          | 15       |
| N=84                               | 39                                                                   | 15         | 30       |

Table A-11: Correlations between Self-identification and the Role of Religious Participation in Identity Changes toward Pan-ethnicity

| Attitudinal Statements<br>Since I have been participating in lay groups, I have begun to identify myself as Hispanic or Latino | Self-Identification Dummy Variables |                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                | Pan-ethnicity                       | Nationality and Pan-ethnicity    |
| - Agree                                                                                                                        | R = .260<br>Sig (2-tailed) .008     | R = -.334<br>Sig (2-tailed) .001 |
| - No Opinion                                                                                                                   | R = -.151<br>Sig (2-tailed) .127    | R = .199<br>Sig (2-tailed) .044  |
| - Disagree                                                                                                                     | R = -.172<br>Sig (2-tailed) .083    | R = .218<br>Sig (2-tailed) .027  |

## APPENDIX B RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

After conducting preliminary research during the summer of 1997, the field research sites were chosen, two Roman Catholic churches and one Protestant congregation in the city of Paterson, New Jersey. I selected churches with congregations with majority Latino/Hispanic populations. In addition, all three churches have long histories as immigrant churches in the city. Further, concerned about comparability, since two Roman Catholic churches were selected, I thought it important to choose a more mainstream Protestant church, as opposed to an evangelical congregation. Finally, access to the congregations was also a critical issue in the selection of the research sites. I was fortunate to be invited to participate in a Pew-founded project led by Manuel Vasquez, Anna Peterson and Philip Williams, which culminated in the edited volume, *Christianity, Social Change and Globalization in the Americas* (2001). This research project developed from that larger project and gave me entry into the three communities, which became the research sites.

Upon obtaining permission from the pastors to conduct the research, membership lists were requested for each of the congregations. The membership registry was only obtained for Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, which at the time of the research had 300 registered families. It was determined that St. John the Baptist Church had approximately 580 registered families. Given the inability to obtain the other membership lists and the low returns from mail-in surveys, surveys of the congregations were collected in a variety of ways. All pastors allowed me to speak to the congregation

and hand out surveys after Sunday services. In addition, surveys were completed at Church functions and during scheduled meetings of lay groups. Although 70 surveys were collected in each of the Roman Catholic communities, I was able to use 66 for St. John the Baptist and 68 for Our Lady of Lourdes.

The sample size for El Buen Pastor Christian Reformed Church was much smaller. At the time of the research there were only about 50 active families in the congregation. Partly for that reason, I was not able to approach the desired sample size. Only 13 surveys were collected for this congregation. While I acknowledge the limitation of this small sample, given the qualitative approach of this research project, I felt strongly that the sample should remain in the analysis. In addition, although Latinos/Hispanics in the US are still predominantly Roman Catholic, the growth of Protestantism in this community and the fact that the host nation (the US) is Protestant validates the need to include the Protestant sample.

Active religious involvement was defined as membership and active participation in at least one of the lay groups recognized by an established Christian church. Some would argue that this definition is too narrow, because regular attendance at a weekly service could constitute active religious involvement. While that perspective is certainly valid, this study is concerned with how religious participation encourages the types of close-knit relationships that are necessary for group formation. Weekly services provide a space for immigrants of different nationalities to maintain language and culture, but they do not provide the opportunity (particularly in the Roman Catholic context) for close, personal interaction. The kind of exchanges necessary for group formation are to be

found within the context of lay groups and that is why this study chooses to focus on them.

All three pastors and the auxiliary clergy provided me with the names and contact information for the leadership of the lay groups represented at each of the churches. I then contacted each lay leaders requesting that s/he complete a survey and agree to be interviewed, as well as helping in the collections of additional surveys from other individuals participating in their activities. While surveys were collected from anyone who was participating in a Sunday service in one of the Churches, interviews were primarily carried out with lay leaders, lay-group participants and persons identified by the pastors as leaders in the community. In addition, I conducted some interviews with politically active Latinos/Hispanics who were not necessarily tied to any of the three religious sites.

Persons targeted for interviews were asked to first complete a survey and then semi-structured interviews were carried out. Below is the survey given to Catholics (Protestants were given a similar survey that is available upon request) and the interview questions used during interviews with respondents. The interview questions were guidelines, which I used to steer the conversation.

In constructing the Comparison Group, various methods of delivery were contemplated. I considered mailing surveys, but did not believe that sufficient returns would be received. In addition, completing surveys door-to-door was another option, but the risks associated with Paterson's gang and-drug-related crime were thought to outweigh the benefits of that methodology. For these reasons, phone surveys were conducted. The Comparison Group was created from a list of over 300 randomly



selected individuals with Spanish surnames listed in the Paterson area phonebook. The survey instrument used for the religious communities was shortened in order to make it appropriate for phone delivery. While the demographic and migratory information were retained, some of the attitudinal questions were eliminated. I tested the survey instrument and trained a research assistant in proper delivery methods. Given the population of the city of Paterson and the size of the three churches used as research sites, it was determined that approximately 100 surveys would be sufficient for the Comparison Group sample. Of the surveys collected in this sample, I was able to use 99.

One issue discovered in the analysis phase was the lack of combined or multiple identity responses among the Comparison Group. I determined that there were no such responses in this sample because that category was not provided in the survey instead, respondents would have had to "write it in." Since those who received the survey via phone were not able to "write in" their preferences, the findings are skewed toward the categories that were provided to the respondents (i.e., national origin, American, Latino/Hispanic). It is impossible to know how skewed the data are, but it is unlikely that the data would contradict the trend evident in all of the communities in which a preference for pan-ethnicity was evident. It is more likely that the data would show a more than 50% for pan-ethnicity and a more even distribution of the remaining percentage between national origin and a combined identity.

### **Sample Catholic Survey**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Church \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Socio-economic information

Gender

☐ Female☐ Male

Marital status

☐ Single☐ Married☐ Separated/Divorced☐ Widowed

Education. Please indicate the highest level of formal education achieved.

☐ Elementary school – grade \_\_\_\_\_☐ High School – grade \_\_\_\_\_☐ Technical or vocational school – years or degree \_\_\_\_\_☐ College – years or degree \_\_\_\_\_

How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_ years old

What is your current employment status? Mark all that apply.

☐ Self-employed☐ Work at home☐ Work full time☐ Student☐ Work part-time☐ Unemployed☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

What is your occupation? Currently \_\_\_\_\_

In your country of origin \_\_\_\_\_

Approximately what is your salary? \_\_\_\_\_ a month/a year

Counting yourself, how many people live in your home most of the year? \_\_\_\_\_

Counting yourself, how many members of your household are contributing to the household income? \_\_\_\_\_

Approximately what is the annual income of your household or family?☐ \$15,000 or less☐ \$45,000 - \$55,000☐ \$15,000 - \$25,000☐ \$55,000 - \$65,000☐ \$25,000 - \$35,000☐ \$65,000 - \$75,000☐ \$35,000 - \$45,000☐ More than \$75,000

Which best describes you at this time?

☐ I speak only English☐ I speak English and some Spanish

- ☐ I speak English and Spanish equally well  
☐ I speak Spanish and some English  
☐ I speak other languages (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### Migratory Information

Where you born in the United States?

- ☐ Yes (indicate city and state) \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ No (indicate city or province and country) \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate your mother's place of birth (city/province and country) \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate your father's place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

What is your citizenship status?

- ☐ US citizen by birth  
☐ US citizen by naturalization  
☐ Permanent Resident  
☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Where do you currently live?(city, state, country) \_\_\_\_\_

If you live in the US, how long have you lived here?

- |                                         |                                             |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> All my life    | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 year or less     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 – 5 years    | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 – 15 years       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15 to 20 years | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 20 years |

If you live in the US, why did you choose to settle in this city? (Mark all that apply)

- |                                                         |                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Had family living in this city | <input type="checkbox"/> Found a job here                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Began to study here            | <input type="checkbox"/> Had friends here                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Liked the community            | <input type="checkbox"/> There were people of my nationality here |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____          |                                                                   |

If you were born outside of the US, identify your reasons for migrating. (Place a 1 next to the most important, then 2 and so on)

- |                                                           |                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Better employment opportunities  | <input type="checkbox"/> Following family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Better educational opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> Had job offer    |

☐ Due to violence in country of origin
 ☐ Had family here  
☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

If you were born outside of the US, do you maintain contact with your country of origin?

☐ Yes
 ☐ No

What type of contact do you have? (Mark all that apply)

☐ Send money: If yes, how many times \_\_\_\_\_ a month/a year?  
☐ Travel frequently: If yes, how many times \_\_\_\_\_ a month/a year?  
☐ Call frequently: If yes, how many times \_\_\_\_\_ a month/a year?  
☐ Write or receive letters or email  
☐ Read newspapers from your country of origin  
☐ Participate in political activities  
☐ Have investments in your country of origin (ex: property, business, etc)  
☐ Other type of contact (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Do you participate in any organization affiliated with your country of origin?

☐ Yes (Mark all that apply)
 ☐ No  
☐ Social club
 ☐ Sports club  
☐ Political party
 ☐ Cultural organization  
☐ Professional association
 ☐ Religious group  
☐ Civic organization  
☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Do you participate in any organization in this country that is unaffiliated with your country of origin?

☐ Yes (Mark all that apply)
 ☐ No  
☐ Social club
 ☐ Sports Club  
☐ Political party
 ☐ Cultural Organization  
☐ Professional association
 ☐ Religious Group  
☐ Civic or organization  
☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### Identity

Thinking about the different ethnic groups living in US, which of the following categories do you most often use to identify yourself?

☐ American

- ☐ Latino/a  
☐ National Origin (ex: Dominican, Peruvian, specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Hispanic  
☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Referring to your previous answer, was this the same term you used when you first arrived in the United States?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No. If no, which did you use before? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you use different identity categories depending on the circumstances? For example, which category would you use if the person surveying you were North American?

- ☐ American  
☐ National Origin (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Latino/Hispanic/a  
☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Which category would you use if the person surveying you were Latino or Hispanic?

- ☐ American  
☐ National Origin (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Latino/Hispanic/a  
☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

What does the word Latino/a or Hispanic mean to you? (Mark all that apply)

- ☐ It is a socio-economic category  
☐ It is an ethnic or racial category  
☐ It is a political category  
☐ It is a category that identifies all Latin American immigrants and their descendants  
☐ It is a category that identifies all persons whose mother tongue is Spanish  
☐ It is a category created by North Americans to identify us  
☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

If you had to choose which identities were most important to you among all of the possible identities that one can have, which would you choose? (Use a 1 for the most important, a 2 for the next and so on).

- |                                            |                                          |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mother/Father     | <input type="checkbox"/> Husband/Wife    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Woman/Man         | <input type="checkbox"/> Son/daughter    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Christian         | <input type="checkbox"/> American        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Latino/a/Hispanic | <input type="checkbox"/> National Origin |

\_\_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### Religious Participation

Do you attend religious services or participate in a religious community?

\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No (go to the end of the survey)

How often do you attend this church or religious community?

\_\_\_\_ times a week \_\_\_\_\_ times a month

How would you characterize your participation before attending this church?

\_\_\_\_ Catholic \_\_\_\_\_ Protestant  
 \_\_\_\_ Very active \_\_\_\_\_ Active  
 \_\_\_\_ Non-active \_\_\_\_\_ Had no religion  
 \_\_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

How would you characterize your participation in this community?

\_\_\_\_ Very active  
 \_\_\_\_ Active  
 \_\_\_\_ Non-active  
 \_\_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

What do you think defines a committed Christian individual? (Mark all that apply)

\_\_\_\_ A person who lives according to God's commandments  
 \_\_\_\_ A person who assists Mass regularly  
 \_\_\_\_ A person who participates in religious activities or organizations  
 \_\_\_\_ A person who prays frequently  
 \_\_\_\_ A person who helps the needy  
 \_\_\_\_ A person who defends the rights of others  
 \_\_\_\_ A person who fights against injustice  
 \_\_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been attending this church? \_\_\_\_\_

In what religious groups, ministries or activities do you participate? (Mark all that apply)

\_\_\_\_ Bible Study \_\_\_\_\_ times a week/month  
 \_\_\_\_ Eucharistic Ministry \_\_\_\_\_ times a week/month  
 \_\_\_\_ Retreats \_\_\_\_\_ times a week/month

|                                                   |                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Music Ministry           | <input type="checkbox"/> times a week/month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Charismatic Renewal      | <input type="checkbox"/> times a week/month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth group              | <input type="checkbox"/> times a week/month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neocatechumenate group   | <input type="checkbox"/> times a week/month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hermandades              | <input type="checkbox"/> times a week/month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cursillos de Cristiandad | <input type="checkbox"/> times a week/month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Women's group            | <input type="checkbox"/> times a week/month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lector ministry          | <input type="checkbox"/> times a week/month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer group             | <input type="checkbox"/> times a week/month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Others (specify) _____   | <input type="checkbox"/> times a week/month |
| _____                                             | <input type="checkbox"/> times a week/month |
| _____                                             | <input type="checkbox"/> times a week/month |

If you do not participate in any group or Ministry, which Ministries would you be interested in participating in?

|                                                   |                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bible Study              | <input type="checkbox"/> Eucharistic Ministry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retreats                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Music Ministry       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Charismatic Renewal      | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Ministry       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neo-catechumenate group  | <input type="checkbox"/> Hermandades          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cursillos de Cristiandad | <input type="checkbox"/> Women's group        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer group             | <input type="checkbox"/> Lector Ministry      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Others (specify) _____   |                                               |

What do you most like about this parish? (Mark all that apply)

|                                                                  |                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The parish community                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Where the parish is located |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The buildings and grounds of the parish | <input type="checkbox"/> The priests and friars      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other characteristics (specify) _____   |                                                      |

What do you like the least about this parish? (Mark all that apply)

|                                                                  |                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The parish community                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Where the parish is located |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The buildings and grounds of the parish | <input type="checkbox"/> The priests and friars      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other characteristics (specify) _____   |                                                      |

In your view what is the relationship between the Church and its members?

|                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> It is the responsibility of the Church (as an institution) to serve the people. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> It is the responsibility of the people to serve the Church.                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Church and the people serve each other.                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____                                                           |

### Attitudes

The purpose of this part of the survey is for you to provide your opinion about the following statements. Please read each statement carefully and mark an "X" next to one of the five options (ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree").

|                                                                                                                                                                               | Strongly Agree<br>[1] | Agree<br>[2] | Have no opinion<br>[3] | Disagree<br>[4] | Strongly Disagree<br>[5] |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| In this religious community all nationalities have equal voice, power and representation, without regard to what country they are from or how long they have lived in the US. | 1 [ ]                 | 2 [ ]        | 3 [ ]                  | 4 [ ]           | 5 [ ]                    |
|                                                                                                                                                                               |                       |              |                        |                 |                          |
| The majority of people in this church establish friendships with individuals from their own country of origin.                                                                | 1 [ ]                 | 2 [ ]        | 3 [ ]                  | 4 [ ]           | 5 [ ]                    |
|                                                                                                                                                                               |                       |              |                        |                 |                          |
| Although, we are all Christians, maintaining our individual nationality, culture and practices is important.                                                                  | 1 [ ]                 | 2 [ ]        | 3 [ ]                  | 4 [ ]           | 5 [ ]                    |
|                                                                                                                                                                               |                       |              |                        |                 |                          |
| I prefer attending this church because there are many Latin Americans from different countries.                                                                               | 1 [ ]                 | 2 [ ]        | 3 [ ]                  | 4 [ ]           | 5 [ ]                    |
|                                                                                                                                                                               |                       |              |                        |                 |                          |
| In this church nationality is not important, what is most important is that we are all Christians.                                                                            | 1 [ ]                 | 2 [ ]        | 3 [ ]                  | 4 [ ]           | 5 [ ]                    |
|                                                                                                                                                                               |                       |              |                        |                 |                          |
| Although previously most of my friends were of my own nationality, participating in lay groups has enabled me to make friends with Latinos of other nationalities.            | 1 [ ]                 | 2 [ ]        | 3 [ ]                  | 4 [ ]           | 5 [ ]                    |
|                                                                                                                                                                               |                       |              |                        |                 |                          |
| Participating in lay groups has made me view Latinos of other nationalities more favorably.                                                                                   | 1 [ ]                 | 2 [ ]        | 3 [ ]                  | 4 [ ]           | 5 [ ]                    |
|                                                                                                                                                                               |                       |              |                        |                 |                          |
| Participating in lay groups has changed the way I identify myself.                                                                                                            | 1 [ ]                 | 2 [ ]        | 3 [ ]                  | 4 [ ]           | 5 [ ]                    |
|                                                                                                                                                                               |                       |              |                        |                 |                          |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Strongly Agree<br>[1] | Agree<br>[2] | Have no opinion<br>[3] | Disagree<br>[4] | Strongly Disagree<br>[5] |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| It is important that in their sermons and teachings priests encourage the community to recognize, that as Latin American immigrants, we share a Latino culture, even if we all come from different countries. | 1 [ ]                 | 2 [ ]        | 3 [ ]                  | 4 [ ]           | 5 [ ]                    |
| When priests are speaking of Latin American immigrants, they should distinguish between different national origin groups because we are all different.                                                        | 1 [ ]                 | 2 [ ]        | 3 [ ]                  | 4 [ ]           | 5 [ ]                    |
| Each national group represented in the parish can and should celebrate the important festivities of each country (i.e., independence day, day of patron saint).                                               | 1 [ ]                 | 2 [ ]        | 3 [ ]                  | 4 [ ]           | 5 [ ]                    |
| All members of the parish, regardless of nationality, should participate in the celebrations of others' national festivities.                                                                                 | 1 [ ]                 | 2 [ ]        | 3 [ ]                  | 4 [ ]           | 5 [ ]                    |
| Usually, if there is a national festivity or activity held at the parish, only the people from that country attend the event.                                                                                 | 1 [ ]                 | 2 [ ]        | 3 [ ]                  | 4 [ ]           | 5 [ ]                    |
| All Latin Americans living in the US, without regard to country of origin, share cultural characteristics that unite them as a Latino or Hispanic community.                                                  | 1 [ ]                 | 2 [ ]        | 3 [ ]                  | 4 [ ]           | 5 [ ]                    |

### Semi-Structured Interview Questions

#### Migratory History

1. When did you arrive in the United States?
2. How and why did you make the decision to migrate?
3. Did you come directly to the United States or did you migrate to another country before arriving in the US?
4. Did you have friends or family in this country? Did they offer help in migrating, i.e. money, housing, etc.

5. Was it difficult to make the decision to migrate?
6. Did you arrive in Paterson when you first migrated or did you arrive in another city?
7. Why did you choose to live in Paterson?
8. Was it difficult to find employment in Paterson?
9. Where did you find employment?
10. Describe your adaptation process to a new country, a new city and a new culture?
11. Did you migrate by yourself or did you also bring family members? How was their adaptation process?
12. When you first arrived in this city, who made up your social group? Was it composed primarily of people of your own country of origin?

#### Religious Participation

13. When did you begin attending this church?
14. How did you hear about this church? Family, friends, etc?
15. Why did you decide to continue coming to this church? What did you like about this religious community? What did you dislike about this religious community?
16. Do you participate in any of the lay groups sponsored by the church or in any of the activities?
17. If yes, what does this participation mean to you? What does it mean to participate in this group?
18. Has your participation in these groups aided you in interacting with Latinos of other nationalities? Has your social group changed based on your participation in this church and in these groups? In other words, do you have different friends since you have been attending this church?
19. Has your participation in this church changed the way you see other Latinos? Has your participation eliminating stereotypes you may have had of other Latino groups?
20. There are many nationalities represented in this church, how would you describe their interaction? Do the different national origin groups work well together? Do they get along? Do people of different nationalities make friends with other outside of their own national group or do people tend to make friends with individuals from their own country?

21. When the church sponsors a national festivity (day of a patron saint or Independence Day) do people from other countries participate or help in the organization?
22. Do you consider this church to constitute a united community? Explain.

#### Identity

23. When thinking of other national origin groups living in the US, what term do you use to identify yourself? Why do you use this term? What does this term mean to you?
24. What does the term Hispanic mean to you? What does the term Latino mean to you?
25. In your opinion is there something that unites people from Latin America, other than the Spanish language? Do people from Latin American or of Latin American background share cultural traits? If so, what kind of traits?
26. Do Latin Americans share traits that separate them from North Americans?
27. Describe your experiences with other Latin Americans (from countries other than your own). Have those experiences changed since coming to this church? If so how?
28. Describe your experiences with North Americans? Have you ever or someone you know experienced discrimination or rejection?
29. Do you believe the Latino community in Paterson is a united community? Do you believe the Latino community in the US is a united community?

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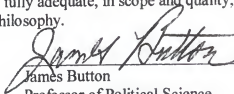
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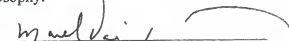
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Philip Williams  
Professor of Political Science

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James Button  
Professor of Political Science

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This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Department of Political Science in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

May 2004

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